

The History of Wingate Baptist Church 1810-2009



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1810-1984
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1985-2009
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**THE HISTORY
OF
WINGATE
BAPTIST CHURCH**

1810-2009

**BY
CAROLYN CALDWELL GADDY
AND
JERRY L. SURRATT**

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By Carolyn Caldwell Gaddy and Dr. Jerry L. Surratt**

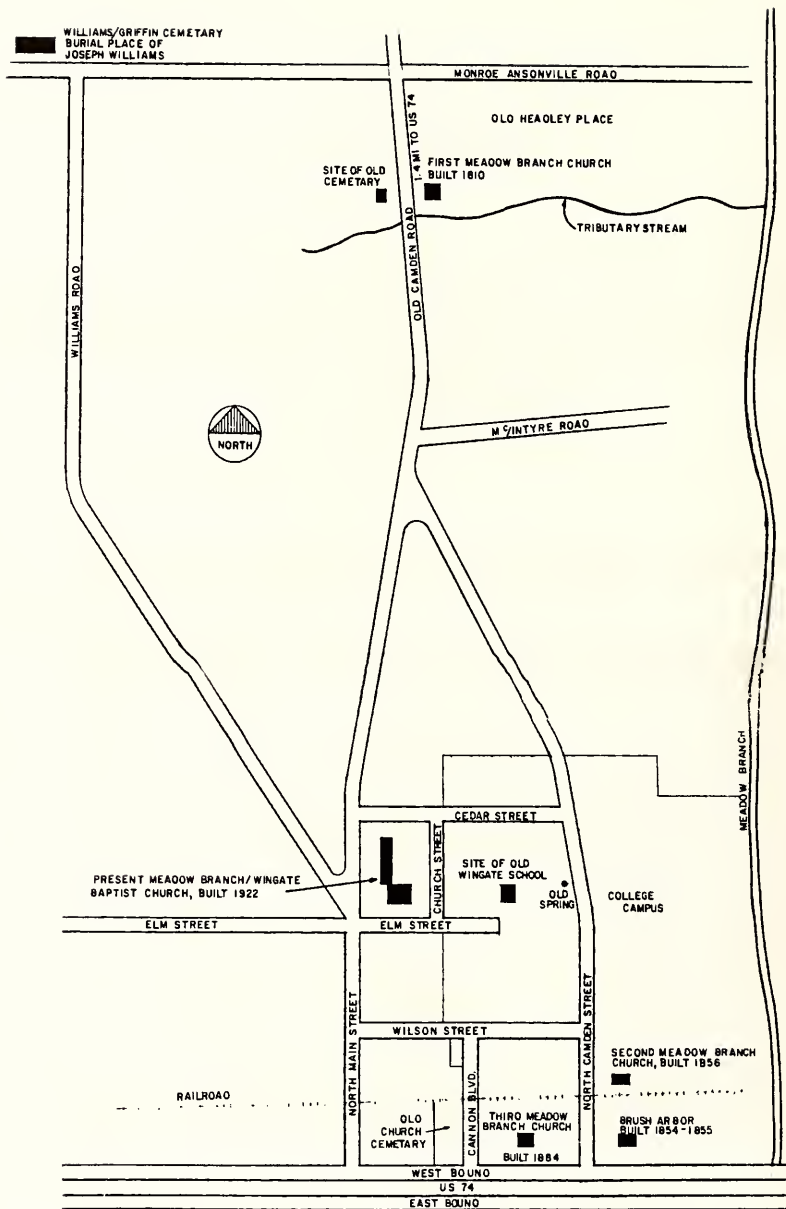
WPA 101

PART I

“Saturday Before the Second Sabith...”

The History of Meadow Branch-Wingate Baptist Church 1810-1984

**BY
Carolyn Caldwell Gaddy**



Vicinity Map
Not to Scale



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	vii
The Beginning (1810-1835)	9
A New Beginning (1835-1856).....	17
Hard Times — Good Times (1856-1896)	29
A New Day — New Venture (1896-1920).....	45
The Best of Times — The Worst of Times (1920-1940).....	67
A World at War — A Church on the Move (1940-1960).....	88
Remembering the Past — Hoping for the Future (1960-1984)...	106
Appendix	
An Act to Incorporate the Wingate School	127
Pastors	129
Deacons.....	130
Clerks	131
Sunday School Superintendents.....	132
Ordained by Meadow Branch-Wingate Baptist Church.....	132
First Guidelines for Church Officers and Committees	133
Constitution and By-Laws (September 1981)	149
Church Roll — 1984	166
Endnotes	171
Bibliography	174
Index	177

THE PRESENTATION

With pleasure and pride the committee on the history of the church presents this publication to the congregation. It is the work of one of our members, Carolyn Caldwell Gaddy. Although we have given her our support, encouragement, and whatever expertise we possessed, this writing is the product of her ability, dedication, and hard labor. She has combined careful research in records whose existence was unknown for several generations with the interpretative insights of a historian to produce an exciting narrative of the past.

Carolyn Caldwell Gaddy is a native of Rock Hill, South Carolina, where she was graduated from Winthrop College with a Master of Arts in history. In 1932 she began a 43 year tenure at Wingate College as a teacher of history and political science. She became a member of this congregation in 1933 and the bride of Sam Gaddy in 1947. Carolyn has always been active in the work of the church, including service as Sunday School teacher and superintendent, and on the Board of Deacons. Retiring from college teaching in 1975, Carolyn has immersed herself in the activities of our community and church — from politics to the Sixty-Plus Club to practicing the craft of her profession.

Wingate Baptist Church is extremely fortunate to have Carolyn Caldwell Gaddy as the author of its history. We know that for her it could only have been a labor of love. To her we extend the appreciation of generations past, present, and yet unborn for her illumination of our heritage.

The Committee on History

Evelyn P. Bivens

Carolyn C. Gaddy

J. D. Hogan

Baron D. Smith

Jerry L. Surratt

PREFACE

Interest in writing this history of Meadow Branch-Wingate Baptist Church began several years ago when original minutes dating from 1835 were found rather carelessly stacked in a cabinet in the church library. At the encouragement of Dr. Roy Ford, I began to think seriously, when time permitted, about attempting the task. It was known that the church had been constituted in 1810, but although the records from 1835 to 1982 were almost completely intact in their original form, no records could be found of the period from 1810 to 1835. Time and again they had been referred to as lost. When work began, it soon became evident that the old minutes available could not be handled without damaging them extensively. To preserve them, inquiry was made of John R. Woodard, Director of the North Carolina Baptist Historical Collection, Z. Smith Reynolds Library, Wake Forest University, as to whether these minutes had been microfilmed for that collection. His answer was negative but that the collection did already include original minutes of Meadow Branch Church from 1810 to 1845. The next day Dr. Ford and I went to Winston-Salem to see this "miracle" and also to take the 1835-1982 minutes to be microfilmed. Mr. Woodard and his assistant, Miss Myrtle Lyttle, produced the "lost" minutes, which had been donated to Wake Forest, we learned, in 1917 by Mrs. C. M. Brewer.

This event gave impetus to the project, and on June 13, 1982, a committee of Dr. Jerry Surratt, Mrs. John A. Bivens, Mr. Ed Hogan, Mr. Baron Smith, and I went to work. The date set for completion was June 1984.

Much material has been found to supplement the bare records of the minutes. Mrs. John A. Bivens has given generously of her time and many articles, records, and programs which she has collected over the years. Especially valuable has been the "Journal" of her father-in-law John W. Bivens. Corinna Chaney Bivens has contributed her store of

materials, which included the "Journal" of her mother Mrs. Ellie Mullis Chaney. Lee Williams, a Union County history "buff," graciously opened to me his collection. Janet Freeman, librarian of Wingate College, made the college records available and gave other valuable assistance. Helen Helms, the church secretary, has searched for and found many church records not in the minutes. Baron Smith has given encouragement and aided financially. It was he who took me to the site at the "old Headley place" and who was responsible for the research and production of the map.

My special thanks go to Dr. J. Glenwood Clayton, Director of the Baptist Historical Collection at Furman University, for making the materials there available to me.

Without Dr. Surratt the manuscript would never have achieved any kind of order. He has cheerfully and carefully reviewed the manuscript and given suggestions. Dr. Ford has been responsible for gently but urgently pushing when the pace slowed. To Anne McConnell goes credit and gratitude for the translating of my script into the initial typed copy. Mildred Chapman has donated her time and valuable assistance in the typing of the final draft. Bernard Helms is due special thanks for the use of his typing and copying equipment in the preparation of the manuscript for the printers.

My gratitude goes also to almost the entire congregation for their continued interest, support, and encouragement. It is my sincere hope that this record of a great old church, its struggles through wars, depressions, reversals, and yes, even disagreements, will inspire us to give to it our best. May the spirit of sacrifice, hope, and the desire to serve God and our fellowman continue in us and our successors, keeping alive the traditions and ideals of these many men and women who have been the history of Meadow Branch-Wingate Baptist Church.

CHAPTER ONE

1810-1835 The Beginning

*The Meadow Branch Church . . . from the Goardvine Church. The Saturday before the Second Sabith in January 1810 and become constituted by John Bennett and Joseph Williams assistant in 1811.*¹

Thus begin the original minutes of the Meadow Branch Church and what in 1931 became the Wingate Baptist Church, the oldest continuous missionary Baptist church in the Union Association.² In the first pages of these minutes are found at least forty-one names, some of which are illegible because of the age and condition of the manuscript. In addition to John Bennett and Joseph Williams, the following names are listed: John Baggitt, Enoch Griffin, James Stegall, William Hamilton, Jacob Stegall, Bryant Awston, Daniel Treadway, Allen (?) Roberts, (?) Thompson, and John Bently. The female members are listed separately: Elisabeth Trull, Elizabeth Bennett, Minney Rickson, Tilley Bennett, Elizeabeth Williams, Hanner Sikes, Elizeabeth Griffin, Esther Price, Elizabeth Shulvey, and Rhonda Benton. Baptized in October 1810 were Thomas Stegall, William James Puthey, Janee Anne Baggitt, Patsy Drumbelow, and Bessey Thomas. We know very little about the majority of these people, but we do know something of Bennett and Williams.

John Bennett was instrumental in the constituting of Richardson's Creek Church in 1801. He came from that congregation to Meadow Branch, and when Richardson's Creek Church died around 1834, some members followed Bennett to Meadow Branch, while others went to High Hill Primitive Baptist Church.³

"Joseph Williams was possibly an offspring of the Welsh Neck Baptist section."⁴ After serving during the Revolutionary War in the First North Carolina Regiment under Colonel Thomas Clark, Joseph Williams came to Union County from Sampson County and bought land from John Bivens in 1797, near the location of the first Meadow Church. Elder Williams and his second wife Martha were buried in the Williams' family graveyard near Wingate on the old Monroe-Ansonville road. A reunion is held at the grave in his honor on Tuesday after the third Sunday in August of each year.⁵

As one stands today on that lonely hillside with virtually no visible evidence of the passing time, suddenly a feeling of the power and devotion of this man is overwhelming. How far-reaching has been his influence (and that of others like him who share in the founding of Meadow Branch) we can only guess. He remained a member of this church until his death in 1825.

During 1810 and 1811 the minutes recorded baptisms, charges of ill-doing among members, such as non-attendance at services (one of the most common), drinking, gossiping, faulty doctrine, and foul language. The church indeed set itself up to judge the morality of its members by a very rigid code — the ultimate punishment being the exclusion from membership.

In April 1812 the church agreed that it needed "a constitution and consideration of such should be done at the next conference or meeting."⁶ This matter had been under consideration since January when concern for a constitution was expressed, so at this point matters moved rapidly. The Saturday before the second Sunday in May 1812 the document was presented, and on the next day (Sunday), Meadow Branch Church accepted its official constitution.

Who were these people who on that spring day of 1812 dared form a church? Times were not good. This section of North Carolina had been severely damaged physically and psychologically by the Revolutionary War, which had barely ended thirty years before. The Constitution of the United States was only twenty-five years old. James Madison was President, and the War of 1812 (the Second War for American Indepen-

dence) was already in progress. England and France were at war with each other, and our country was caught in the middle. These two major powers were playing havoc with our trade and our new-found independence. Let us look at the background of these hardy people who, under such trying circumstances, were so intent on founding a church.

We know that in this section of the Carolinas at that time “two streams of Baptist influence,” both of Welsh origin, existed: the old Welsh Neck settlement (whence we are reasonably sure Joseph Williams came) near Society Hill, South Carolina, and the old Sandy Creek section in current Randolph County, North Carolina.

The Welsh Neck settlement descended from a group of sixteen people led by Thomas Griffin, a minister, who had come from the counties of Pembroke and Caimathen in Wales. They boarded the ship *William and Mary* at Milford Haven in July 1701 and landed at Philadelphia in September. They were given a tract of land on which they built a “neat brick church.” This property was then in Chester County, Pennsylvania. It is now split between New Castle County, Delaware, and about one-fourth of it is located in Cecil County, Maryland. This climate and place did not suit these Welsh, and after several moves they located in South Carolina near Society Hill. In 1738 they “organized into a society of the Baptist faith” and from there began missionary work. Welsh Neck became a member of the old Charleston Association which had been organized in 1751 and said to be the second oldest association in America.⁹ The old Goardvine Church, near the Olive Branch community, organized about 1800 and out of which Meadow Branch came, was a member of this association until joining the Moriah Association in 1815 as a charter member.

The other source of Baptist origins in this section was the Sandy Creek Baptist Church in present Randolph County. This church was organized November 22, 1755, under the care of Elder Shubal Stearnes. He with his wife, Peter Stearnes and wife, Ebenezer Stearnes and wife, Shubal Stearnes, Jr. and wife, Daniel Marshall and wife, Joseph Breed and wife, Enos Simpson and wife, and Jonathan Polk and wife formed this church. They had come to North Carolina from Connecticut.¹⁰ They were descendants of families who had come from Wales by way of England. In a short time Sandy Creek had grown to over six hundred members, and other churches began to branch out of the original church. In 1758 Stearnes organized the Sandy Creek Association. Sandy Creek was the mother church for Little River Church, which in

turn contributed to the founding of Rocky River Church. In fact, nearly all the churches up and down the Rocky River had their source in Sandy Creek, including Goardvine and Richardson's Creek, from which came the early members of Meadow Branch. "From the beginning we see that this body (Sandy Creek) was thoroughly missionary."¹¹ It is generally agreed that the work in Stanly, Anson, and the upper part of Union is the result of this effort.¹²

Professor E. W. Sikes expressed very well some of the spirit of these early beginnings when he addressed more than one thousand people gathered to celebrate the one-hundredth birthday of Meadow Branch Church:

In 1810 it was decided to found a church and call it Meadow Branch. The place selected was on the Concord-Camden road one mile north of Wingate. There on that sloping hillside covered with giant oaks that knew not the woodsman's axe, and near a purling stream, Elders John Bennett and Joseph Williams and others who brought letters from Gourdvine established the ancient temple of God. Here your ancestors and mine one hundred years ago made the welkin ring. They, hardy frontiersmen that they were, felled the trees and hewed the logs to make . . . the first structure.¹³

This building standing on the Headley place was occupied by Meadow Branch Church from the time that it was constituted until the split in 1835. But much was to happen before that event. The church minutes faithfully recorded baptisms, excommunication of members, and restoration of membership to some of those same members after their repentance.

When the church was founded, it became associated with the old Charleston Association because of its close identification with the Welsh Neck settlement. It was a long journey to the "union meetings," and when the Moriah Association was formed out of the Charleston Association in 1815, Meadow Branch became a charter member. The Moriah Association was composed of churches in the north central part of South Carolina and the south central section of North Carolina. The records show the church faithfully appointing delegates to the "Moriah" and sending yearly letters reporting its progress. It remained in that association until the formation of the Brown Creek Baptist Association in 1854.

The minutes for many years continued in much the same vein. A note

of interest was included in October 1816: "Jacob a person of color is rec'd into the membership by Baptism." An incident in May 1819 in which Winburne Jenkins was "clar'd from all expenses for finding the sacramental elements of the church" was included without explanation of the "finding." The choosing of deacons seems to have been sporadic, one by one, with no limit to terms. In 1830 two "sisters" became so embroiled in name-calling and quarreling they were brought before the church. For months attempts to settle the matter failed. A committee was sent to arbitrate, but to no avail. Finally both women and one of the husbands were excluded from the membership. This must have been some argument. It rocked the church.

The minutes of 1828 indicated that something much more distressing was happening than the familiar accusations of "foul language," drinking, failure to attend services, and arguments among members. The records showed an increasing number of members were being dismissed by letter. The church also excluded a number of members without recording any reason. A conflict arose between those who strongly supported the mission movement and those who opposed it. In August of 1834 Brother Brasington was called to "supply with preaching." W. F. Brasington was well-known in the Moriah Association, having been instrumental in "building up most of the churches that composed that association."¹⁴ No answer had been received by October, so another message was sent in November. Brasington replied that he could not come to serve a church so divided. Apparently the differences at Meadow Branch were well-known elsewhere. The controversy over missions which was confronting the Meadow Branch Church was not simply a local issue. Its roots were deep in Baptist history. Although Baptists of differing theological ideas came to America, by 1800 the heavy majority was Calvinist in theology but committed to evangelism to spread the gospel. Meadow Branch Baptists were likely of this conviction. The congregation evidently disagreed, however, on whether organizations outside the local church should be established to promote missions. In 1813 Luther Rice and Adoniram Judson, two Congregationalist missionaries on their way to India, became Baptists by conviction. Judson stayed in the mission field, and Rice returned to the United States to rally Baptist support for foreign missions. In 1814 "The Baptist Board of Foreign Missions for the United States" was founded, and Dr. Richard Furman, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Charleston, South Carolina, was elected president. The efforts of this body crystalized the

disagreements on missions in many Baptist churches throughout the country. In the 1820s and 1830s many splits occurred such as the one in the Meadow Branch Church.

On Saturday before the second Sunday in December 1834, "the state of the church was inquired into and took up the case of missionary and anti-missionary." After a "grate deal of debating," a move was made for "a day of fasting and prayer and humiliation to God to show us our rongs and bring us together again,"¹⁵ and accordingly the day before Christmas in 1834 was designated for that purpose. Apparently the day of fasting and prayer failed to bring unity. No minutes for January, February, and March survived, but we read that in April 1835 Samuel Williams requested to recall the "move he had made for division of the church at a former conference . . . and that he held to the same principles he did about the missionary cause." It was agreed to call for help. Jake Lewallian, Jacob Helms, and Solloman Marsh were appointed to reconcile the disagreeing members. The next month Jacob Helms reported that so great a division existed in the church between the missionary and the anti-missionary groups that the committee would not make a recommendation. After much discussion the "Helps" (committee) were dismissed, and the congregation agreed to meet the next Saturday to "settle it ourselves."

On the Saturday before the third Sunday in May 1835, the church met in conference, and Lemuel Williams, moved that it "might be that the church would be willing to come together." John Griffin "labored" to get them together. John Griffin said he stood with the association (missionary). Two or three times William Hamilton moved to take a vote, but it was not granted. This must have been a highly emotional meeting — men pleading for agreement, some demanding an immediate settlement and each side so sure *they* were right. Finally they agreed to call for Jake Lewallian as a "help." Saturday before the second Sunday in June 1835, the "dispute was continued after much disputing about the same. The missionaries moved to lay all our disputing down and apply to the Association (Moriah) for helps." The anti-missionaries refused since "they believed if they (the association) came, we (the anti-missionaries) should be cut off." The anti-missionaries agreed to stand by the first division to meet at Griffin's "meatting" house for further consideration of their beliefs. In August 1835 they came together "according to the appointment and on motion the church agreed to excommunicate all the missionaries and accordingly we done so."¹⁶

Some explanation of what happened is necessary beyond what appears in the original minutes. It is believed that the "first division" mentioned in the minutes gave the majority vote to the missionaries, and they kept the house of worship but lost the minutes. The clerk was one of the anti-missionaries, and they began meeting in Griffin's Meeting House, still calling themselves Meadow Branch Church. They had lost the church house, but had kept the minutes. This original book of minutes includes a record of the constituting of the church and its history until the split in 1835. It also includes the records of the anti-missionary group until 1846. Its meetings were either "held by appointment" or on the Saturday before the first Sunday of each month, whereas before separation they had met on the Saturday before the second Sunday. This book contains minutes until May 1846, when they cease without explanation. It is generally believed that some of this group went back to the old Meadow Branch Church, some to High Hill Primitive Baptist Church, and some to other Primitive Baptist churches in the area.

This apparently explains why the minutes of Meadow Branch Church from 1810 to 1835 were considered to be "lost"; they had gone with the clerk and the anti-missionary group. In 1917 those minutes, along with those of the anti-missionaries from 1835-1846 were donated to the Baptist archives at Wake Forest by Mrs. C. M. Brewer. It was at Wake Forest University in 1982 that they were located. They have since been available in microfilm form to document this history of that early period.

CHAPTER TWO

1835-1856 A New Beginning

We the undersigned considering ourselves (as a church) in a desolate and distressing State for a length of time, duly took into consideration the expediency of applying to the Moriah Baptist Association for help and unanimously agreed to do so . . .¹

There is little doubt that the above statement truly described the conditions and feelings of all seventy-four persons who made up this new Meadow Branch Church. As accurately as the now-faded minutes can be read, the following were the “undersigned” to this cry for help:

THE BRETHRENS NAMES

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Leemuel Williams | 10. Enoch H. Griffen |
| 2. John Griffen | 11. Nathaniel Bivens |
| 3. Enoch Sikes | 12. Jonathan Williams |
| 4. Elam Williams | 13. Wilson M. Williams |
| 5. Walter Gibson | 14. Tom a slave |
| 6. Theophilus Hobgood | 15. Joseph Griffen |
| 7. Coalman Williams | 16. John Bivens |
| 8. Sherwood Prolen | 17. John P. Griffen |
| 9. Mark Kiser | 18. John C. Williams |

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| 19. James F. Lee | 24. Heurin Williams |
| 20. Abram Broome | 25. Culpeper Griffin |
| 21. Malachi Ingram | 26. William King |
| 22. James Benton | 27. Jeremiah Parry |
| 23. James W. Benton | 28. W. L. Benton |
- (added in another handwriting)

THE SISTERS NAMES

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Elizabeth Williams | 15. Sarah Hobgood |
| 2. Sarah Griffen | 16. Rhoda Williams |
| 3. Easther Edwards | 17. Lethe Williams |
| 4. Hanah Likes | 18. Melinda Griffen |
| 5. Sarah May | 19. Jamima Helmons |
| 6. Charety Williams | 20. Marget Bivens |
| 7. Metildah Benett | 21. Nancey Williams |
| 8. Franky Tomberlin | 22. Gatecy Helmons |
| 9. Barbery Preson | 23. Nancey Sikes |
| 10. Elizabeth Collins | 24. Mahaley Bass |
| 11. Sarah Shepherd | 25. Mary May |
| 12. Caty Williams | 26. Layede a M. Williams |
| 13. Nancy Williams | 27. Easther a slave |
| 14. Marget Gibson | 28. Martha Griffen |

THE BLAK PEOPLE NAMES

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Amy | 37. Jane Griffen |
| | (added in another handwriting) |
| 29. Marget Pistel | 38. Leah a slave |
| 30. Eliza Bivens | 39. Elizabeth Perry |
| 31. Martha Griffen | 40. Permelia Roling |
| 32. Martha A. K. Griffen | 41. Evalinen Bivens |
| 33. Ann Ingram | 42. Martha Sinkler |
| 34. Lydia Williams | 43. Druselia Bivens |
| 35. Martha Benton | 44. Vilot a slave |
| 36. Lydia Benton | 45. Sarah Williams |

The above lists may include names added up to 1848.

The association was very prompt in responding to the call for help, and on Thursday, October 22, 1835, Elders T. Mason, Joel Gullledge, and W. F. Brasington (who had previously been called to preach at Meadow Branch but had refused) came to Meadow Branch to meet with the congregation.

Eld. T. Mason preached from the 4th ch. 19v. Philipians. But my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. After a short interval we met in conference W. F. Brasington and Eld. T. Mason took the Chair and made such inquiries as were deemed necessary and after a fair investigation of our Faith and practice they unanimously recognized us as the Meadow Branch Baptist Church and now we do heartily and willingly subscribe to the following Covenant & Rules of Decorum — Article the 1 We the following names being the members that now compose the Meadow Branch Baptist Church of Christ, Do as in the Presences of the eternal God Who knows the Secrets of all hearts and in the presence of Angels and men acknowledge ourselves to be under the most solemn covenant with the Lord to (be to him?) and no other god the true and living Everlasting and Eternal god, to be our god one and three persons the father son and holy ghost. Also we take the holy scriptures of the old and new testaments to be the Rule of man and Will of God, and so take them as the Rules of our faith and practice and Do promise through the help of the holy Spirit to make them the Rule to guide our lives and practice in the holy sacred ordinances and Church Discipline acknowledge ourselves by nature the children of Wrath, and our hope of mercy with God is only through the Rightness of Christ apprehended by faith Holding Believers Baptism by Immersion laying on of hands Particular Election Eternal Redemption by the free grace of God in Christ Jesus (effectual?) lectual calling by the holy spirit of Justification through the Imputed Righteousness of Jesus Christ (progressive) sanctification through Gods (free) grace and truth, which we Do Believe to be Revealed in the old and new testaments those containing a Perfect Rule of our faith and practice and final perseverance of the saints through grace, we Do Believe in the Resurrection after Death at the Day which God hath appointed to Judge the quick and Dead By the Resurrection of his son Jesus Christ and life Everlasting, Amen & Amen²

“After meeting inquiries were made as to our faith and practice.” The responses seemed adequate. Mason returned on January 9, 1836, “de-

livered a sermon on the 25th Chapter of Isiah, and inquired if we had completed the covenant and Decorum.”³ The answer was negative so accordingly a delegation traveled to the Elizabeth Church, Chesterfield, South Carolina, (the center of the Moriah Association) to inquire as to their rules and covenant, and on May 7, 1836, having received a copy, the church adopted the following to be their own Rules of Decorum and Covenant:

In the presence of the eternal and everlasting God through his grace given us being now a constatuted church of christ at this place We Do solemnly unte to God and each other, agreeable to the holy scripturs of our lord Jesus Christ

Ar 2nd We covnant before the Lord & each other Not to let any sin lie on a brother or sister without reprovng them in the spirit of Meekness agreeable to christ Blesed gospel

Ar the 3rd We solely covant that we will bare each other weakness & infirmities as much as in us lies

Ar 4 we will love and pary for each other

Ar 5th Resolved that we will not take up a reproach to the Discredit of a member in the church by any one in the church nor out of it Except it should be to Reclaim from sin and Error

Articl 6th if We do Discover sin on a Brother or sister We will gently Reprove them in the spirit of meekness agreeable to gosel Rules with Pratting Partiality

Ar 7th We shall kindly and faithfully Reciev Reproof from Each other Belivng it to be for our good and the glory of god

Art 8th We Shall not take any occasion whatever to go to law with a Brother or Sister but Shall be free and willing to leave any matter to be Determined by the church

Art 9th We Do Solemnly promice to bestow our bounties liberally to support the Poor and needy if there be such among us agreeable to what the lord has blest us with

Ar 10th we shall be careful in shewing good Examples to the young and Rising generation by constanstans Duties in our famielies and Elswere and like wise to keep in Subjection those under our Direction as much as in us lies

Ar 11 we will with Joy atend the Public worship of god agreeable to the word when we are comanded, not to for sake the assembling of our selvs together as the mane of Some is

Arti 12 We solemnly Promice to Support our pastor or minister acord- ingly to the worldly goods god has blest us with

Art 13 We promice by the assistance of Devine grace to act towards each other in the love fear and favor of god and Espeacicly to watch over each other Against All vain and foolish talkings and every thing that Dos not becom the folowers of the holy Lam of god seeking the good of each other and the church universally for the glory of god, to hold comunication as saints together in the worship of god and in the holy ordinances and Deciplen of this our church of god Submitting ourselves to the Deciplen of Christ's church as a part of chirst mistical body, according as we shall be guided by the word and Spirit of gods Devine grace still Looking for greator Lights from god which is contained in the holy scriptures Looking and waiting for the glorious Day when the Lord Jesus Christ will take to himself his great power and reign from sea to sea and from the Rivers to the Ends of the Earth

Art 14th This covnant we make with free and full concent of our souls beleiving that through Rich free and boundless grace it will be owned of god confirmed and Ratified in heven before the throne of god and the Lamb

Art 15th We Do solemnly promice that these and all other Evangelical Duties to be performed not in our own Strength but by the Power and Strength of the Lord Jesus Christ to whome be glory power honor and Dominion for ever and ever Amen. So come quickly Lord Jesus

Art 16th this covenant subject to Alteration to any tim when a major- ity of the church shall Deem it nessary^d

Rules of Decoram of the Meadow Branch Church

Arti the 1st Every conference meting witch Dos not imedantly folow Devine worship Shall be opened by Prayr

Ar 2nd when met in conference the Pastor or suplyer of the churc Shall take his seat as moderator and in cace that nether the Pastor or suplyer be present then the church shall call som member to the chair to act as moderator at that conference

Ar 3 It Shall be the Duty of the moderator to invit all orderly members present from any sister church of the same faith and order to a seat in coucil

Ar 4 it shall then be the Duty of the moderator to enqier into the state of the church

A 5 all caces on Docket shall be taken up and be Decided

Ar 6 It shall be the Duty of the moderator to open a Door for the Reception of new members in the church

Ar 7 It shall be the Duty of the moderator to Preserve good order during the time of conference acording to these Rules of Decorum

A 8 the church Shall have a clerk whose duty it shall be to keep a strict and just Record of all the proceedings and Decisions

Ar 9th in time of conference each member shall be entitled to liberty of Speech but shall first arise and Resectfully address the moderator

A 10th no Person shall be admited to Speack on any one Subject more than three times without Liberty from Conference

Ar 11 all motions made and seconed shall com under the consideration of conference unless withdrawn by the Person who made it

Art 12 no query shall be Recieved for Discussion but by a majority of the members Present

Art 13 in all cases when a tie takes Place in vots the casting vote shall be given by the moderator

At 14th when two members shall Rise at the same time to address the Chair the moderator shall Decide who shall be entitld to the floor

Art 15th the moderator shall have Liberty to speake on any subject by first calling som member to the chair

Art 16th any mail member failing to atend two conferace shall be cited to a third and render his excuce for non atendance

17th no Person while in conferance shall Depart from the subject under consideration or cast any Reflections on what may have bin Previouslyly said by any Brother

18th it shall be considered Dis orderly to convers on any Subject whilst in conferance except those that concern the church

19th Amendments may be made to these Rules at any tim when conferance Deemes it necessary⁵

In January 1836 Brother John Gullledge was called to preach. The first year he was to be paid at least twenty-five dollars. He lived in the White Store section, and it was said he was very faithful in the performance of his duties.⁶ Perhaps the church was not so faithful as he, because at the end of the first year, only \$23.75 had been paid to him. Names of donors with amounts contributed appeared in the minutes of December 1836.

On July 9 of that year the congregation agreed to join the "Union" meeting of the Moriah Association. Brother Enoch Sikes was sent as a delegate to the meeting held at the Elizabeth Church in Chesterfield, South Carolina. The next year 1837 Meadow Branch hosted the association with Elder W. J. Brasington as moderator and J. Davis as clerk.

The year 1838 was very important in the history of the church. The members called the "strong, vigorous, wide awake John Culpepper of Montgomery County to be pastor. He was in touch with the progressive spirit of the age . . ."⁷ Culpepper had a distinguished record: three terms as United States congressman, a charter member of the board of trustees of Wake Forest Institute, and forty years service as pastor of Rocky River Church. (An interesting sidelight: He sold the Meadow Branch Church a Bible for seventy-five cents.)

Culpepper retired after only two years, having been in his seventies when he began at Meadow Branch. Shortly after leaving, he died at the home of his son, Elder John Culpepper Jr., in Darlington district, South Carolina, and was buried in the graveyard at Society Hill. How fortunate this church was to have had, for even a brief time, a man of such exceptional experience and vision to lead it at a most critical time in its history.

Lemuel Williams and John Griffen were sent in July 1838 as delegates to the "Union" meeting at Elizabeth Church. The church instructed them to pay one dollar for a copy of the minutes. In October of the same year they paid \$8.30 to the preacher, and again donors and amounts were recorded. In those same October minutes we find the first mention of the serving of the Lord's Supper. Bad weather marked the year 1839. There were no meetings in January, March, or May. However, they made up for lost time in July when they heard three sermons preached and one "exortant" on one day.

Elder Morras was called on February 9, 1839, to supply for that year, and two and a half years later, in November 1841, he became pastor, serving until 1842. Under his leadership, the church first contributed to state missions. This small congregation, very poor according to records, was concerned enough to sacrifice for missions. Elder Morras also delivered a "discourse" on temperance which resulted in pledges for sobriety and the formation of a *temperance* society. In so doing, Meadow Branch followed very closely the action of the Baptist State Convention which had set up a Committee on Temperance Societies in 1833.⁸ Without doubt the leaders of the church were alert to the spirit and the "spirits" of the times.

Several interesting events occurred during Elder Morras' time at Meadow Branch that revealed how people were thinking. Two members (Brother and Sister Gibson) *requested* that they be excluded from membership because they "differed" with the church. For over two years, committees visited them and tried to change their minds. Finally, they were excluded after the last intermediary returned with this reply from Brother Gibson: "I never expect to come ther again nor to commune with them nather." Another case concerned a request by Henderson City Church for information about a former member. The church clerk reported that he could not send a letter because the original minutes (1810-1835) had been lost. (Those were the ones that remained lost until finally located in 1982.) The last matter of note was the application for

membership from Mark Kiser, who had been excluded from another church where he had been a member because he favored missions. The name of the church was deleted.

Dr. J. F. Lee, originally from New York, was called and served as pastor from 1842 to 1846. "He was well educated and an entertaining speaker, but had some peculiar doctrinal ideas which made him an unpopular preacher."⁹ He stopped preaching in 1846 but remained in the county for many years as a practicing physician. In 1845, during his term as pastor, the first Sunday School at Meadow Branch was started with W. J. T. Maske as superintendent.¹⁰ The children came with their spelling books, and the older ones with their Bibles, and they spent Sunday together studying. Nathaniel Bivens was chosen church clerk in that same year with authority to purchase a jug and cup for wine for the communion, and Joseph Griffen was to "procure 1 galon of wine before the next meeting."

Elder E. C. Williams served as pastor from 1846 to 1855, during which period the congregation grew significantly and actively supported state and foreign missions. Williams, who had served as clerk so faithfully for many years, had been ordained in August 1845 and had served Meadow Branch as assistant pastor. According to the minutes, Dr. Lee had by this time become absent very frequently without notice. Elder Williams preached often during Dr. Lee's last year as pastor. Finally, the church requested Lee's presence and an explanation at the next church conference. After many months of questioning and trying to find a solution, Dr. Lee was excommunicated March 9, 1848; it seems his "peculiar doctrinal ideas" had become unacceptable. Until Elder E. L. Davis was called in 1856, Elder Williams, Snider, and others filled the pulpit as interim preachers.

An interesting event was recorded in October 1852 when Brother James Benton and his wife, along with Margaret Bibb, were dismissed at their request "to constitute a church in Monroe." The records show that they, along with six others, formed the First Baptist Church in Monroe. Also, in 1845 members from Meadow Branch had helped constitute Grove Spring Baptist Church. In 1852 Spring Hill Church called on two occasions for assistance in settling their difficulties. E. C. Williams, John Griffin, Lemuel Williams, and Herron Williams were sent to aid them. Meadow Branch was becoming known in the area for its dependable and upright leaders. Support for both home and foreign missions continued. In August 1853, \$3.75 was sent for "China Mis-

sions," and a few months later an additional \$3.00 was sent for the same purpose. The spirit of missions was without doubt growing at Meadow Branch Church.

A split occurred in the congregation in 1854 on a matter of church discipline, and the minority group withdrew to build a church near Rocky River. Each faction claimed to be *the* church and sent delegates to the next session of the Moriah Association. That body appointed a committee to investigate, and they recommended that the majority be recognized. The minority group dwindled, disbanded, and its members went to other places.¹¹

It is difficult to prove exactly what happened to the original Meadow Branch building at the "old Headley place," which was kept by the missionary faction in 1835. Some reports indicated that it was "blown down,"¹² or "sawed in two,"¹³ and that it became a saddle shop during the Civil War. It is known that during the entire winter of 1854-1855 the Meadow Branch congregation worshipped under a brush arbor,¹⁴ after which it built a house of worship on a plot of land containing three acres purchased from Hosea Hale in 1856. The same men who were appointed to buy the land composed the building committee.

In 1855 a very unhappy event occurred involving E. C. Williams and some other brethren of the church. Williams had served Meadow Branch as church clerk for many years; he had been ordained by the church and was now serving as pastor. In June 1855 he preached and acted as moderator. In July of that year he was brought before the church on charges not identified in the minutes. He asked to call a "presbtery" to hear the charges. In the August meeting Williams accused "a part of the church of having circulated false charges against him and that they (the accusers) should be excluded from the membership and their proceedings given to him." The conference called for a vote. Fifteen members voted that the charges were false; twenty-two, that they were true. Williams and fourteen others were excluded from the church. Several months later Williams and two other excluded members appeared at the church conference and asked that the matter be reopened and referred to the association. The church agreed provided that the "hole case" should be put before them. Williams and the others refused and left. It has been difficult to find out what actually happened. We know the conflict was not confined to the Meadow Branch Church. In the minutes of the Moriah Association October 5, 1855, the following report was made:

We your committee to whom it was duly referred to ascertain as far as possible the state of Meadow Branch Church, beg leave to report we find such church in disorder, as far as we are capable of judging, there has been nothing immoral proven on Elder E. C. Williams, but imprudence.¹⁵

But Meadow Branch was adamant, and in October or November of 1856, Williams, along with eleven other members also dismissed, formed the Mill Creek Baptist Church. It was sad that a man who had given so much to his church for over forty years should end his service on a matter of "imprudence."

A new era for the Meadow Branch Church began in September 1856 with the calling of Elder E. L. Davis, who was to serve this congregation for forty years.

MEMBERS 1853

BRETHREN

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Lemul Williams | 22. James B. Williams |
| 2. John Griffin | 23. Sam a slave |
| 3. James Benton | 24. Jackson T. Morris |
| 4. Elam C. Williams | 25. Culpepper Austin |
| 5. Enoch H. Griffin | 26. Thomas H. Teal |
| 6. Shurwood Rollen | 27. James a slave |
| 7. Johnathon Williams | 28. Aza Brooks |
| 8. Wilson U. Williams | 29. Colman Williams |
| 9. Joseph Griffin | 30. Sutteon Williams |
| 10. John C. Williams | 31. Dick a slave |
| 11. John P. Griffin | 32. Burton Gibson |
| 12. Abram Broom | 33. Henry Bivens |
| 13. James W. Benton | 34. Thaderack Brasel |
| 14. W P Benton | 35. Walker Brown |
| 15. Harren Williams | 36. William Price |
| 16. Thomas C. Griffin | 37. W. T. L. Maske |
| 17. Jeremiah Perry | 38. William Hill |
| 18. James C. Williams | 39. Chapman Estrage |
| 19. Aza M. Helmons | 40. Francis Mills |
| 20. Culpepper Williams | 41. William B. Oatin |
| 21. Joseph Hale | 42. James W T Maske |

SISTERS

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Hanah Sikes | 22. Sarah Williams |
| 2. Ester Broome | 23. Esther a slave |
| 3. Nancy E. Williams | 24. Velot a slave |
| 4. Sarah May | 25. Mourning Sikes |
| 5. Mitilda Bennett | 26. Mary J. Sinclair |
| 6. Rhoda Williams | 27. Marget Love |
| 7. Lydia Mills | 28. Elizabeth Pope |
| 8. Jemima Helmons | 29. Ann Philmon |
| 9. Lillorget Bivens | 30. Hanah Broom |
| 10. Drusila Mars | 31. Lewiza Teal |
| 11. Nancy H. Williams | 32. Elena Williams |
| 12. Mehalia Trull | 34. Phebe Medlin |
| 13. Nancy W. Williams | 35. Nancy Griffin |
| 14. Mary McBride | 36. Tempy Morris |
| 15. Martha Williams | 37. Elen Brasel |
| 16. Eliza Jerome | 38. Bede Price |
| 17. Jane Griffin | 39. Elizabeth Shelvly |
| 18. Elizabeth Parry | 40. Delila Price |
| 19. Permela Rolon | 41. Bede Brasel |
| 20. Evelina Bivins | 42. Eady Barnet |
| 21. Martha R. Sinclair | |

CHAPTER THREE

1856-1896

Hard Times — Good Times

Made up nine dollars to pay Hosea Hale for the church land. Apr. 1856 Preaching by Elder James Collins in the new meeting house . . . the church extended their call for Elder E. L. Davis the next year.¹

That original piece of land which was bought from Hosea Hale for nine dollars contained only three acres of land (between Highway 74 and the Seaboard Railroad). September 1, 1873, five acres were purchased from T. J. Huntley, and another one and a half acres from Coleman Stewart on April 8, 1882. The contract for the first building on the lot went to Colonel Jonathan Trull. The members of the church gave him permission to go anywhere on their farms to select and cut timber. The building he erected stood in the line of survey for the old Carolina Central Railroad, so when the company completed the grading for the road, it moved the church house to the south side of the road just off the right-of-way. There it remained until 1886, when it was sold to the public school district for ninety-one dollars and was moved to the southeast corner of the church lot where it was used for school purposes. Later the building was sold to B. D. Austin.²

Let us return again to 1856 and look at an event of importance then taking place. Since 1815 Meadow Branch had been a member of the

Moriah Association, located in North and South Carolina. In 1854 three churches, Mount Olive, Monroe, and Faulks, thought it was advisable to organize another association of the Baptist churches west of the Pee Dee River. It was anticipated that all the organized churches in North Carolina which belonged to the Moriah Association would join this new organization named the Brown Creek Association after the large creek running across the section. Minutes of the first session were left incomplete, but the "Constitution, Rules of Decorum, and Articles of Faith," covering a total of twenty-four pages, were adopted in the first session of 1854.³ At the second session Shiloh and Cross Roads joined this association.

At the time of the moving of the Meadow Branch Church in 1856 to what is now Wingate, Elder E. L. Davis was called to serve as pastor. He served in that capacity for thirty-six years and also for four additional years as a supply preacher until his death in 1896. The minutes indicate that the church in that period had the practice of extending an annual call; in each of the forty years of his ministry, the call of Elder Davis was included in the church minutes.

The Meadow Branch minutes of October 1856 recorded the appointment of delegates to the new Brown Creek Association, and in that year the printed associational minutes recorded receiving and acting affirmatively on the petition and letter from Meadow Branch requesting membership. When the association was called to order in 1857 by D. A. Covington, the moderator, thirteen churches and their delegates were enrolled, Meadow Branch having sent J. Perry, W. T. J. Maske, and J. C. Williams. The associational minutes reported ninety-three baptisms, of which forty-eight were at Meadow Branch. E. L. Davis had held a great revival in 1857⁴ baptizing forty-five persons and collecting \$15.45 for the ministers. (J. Fincher assisted Davis.) Major D. A. Covington, reporting to the *Recorder* the baptismal scene in Richardson's Creek that year, said it reminded him of John the Baptist on the banks of the Jordan.⁵

The minutes of 1857 reported that "E. W. Sikes and slave" were granted letters of dismissal and another slave, Moriah, was brought before the church on charges of immorality and excluded. Apparently slaves were admitted and dealt with in the same manner as the whites.

Meadow Branch Church pledged ten dollars in 1858 to the Brown Creek Association and invited it to meet with Meadow Branch the next year. That year they pledged eleven dollars to missions and paid three

dollars for a copy of the minutes. In this period and even during the Civil War, the church was consistent in appointing delegates to the "Union meeting," sending along letters of progress and buying copies of the minutes. Times were hard, reflecting the general chaos of the country at a time just prior to the Civil War. The first mention of church trustees occurred in August 1858. Sim (?) Roland and H. Bivens were listed first with the following committee: J. C. Williams, J. Parry, A. H. Helms, W. J. T. Maske, Wm. Bivens, Bryant Aswton, R. Bivens, Samuel Moore, H. Teel, Greg. Morris, and Herron Williams. A problem was highlighted in another action taken that same month:

Resolved we will pay to any persons that has subscribed to help build the meeting house and is dissatisfied there money back if they will apply for it.⁶

No application was recorded.

The Civil War and reconstruction bore heavily on the church and the community. No record exists of any meetings held from October 1861 to March 1862. In July a conference was held but with no preaching. Again from April to October of 1864, the only record was the appointment of delegates to the associational meeting. Those were dark days in the history of our country and in the history of Meadow Branch. Only from the associational minutes can we get a picture of what was happening. Those minutes of the meeting of October 11-13, 1861, showed that Meadow Branch had sent H. Bivens and Jas. C. Williams as delegates. The church subscribed \$34.25 to buy Bibles and Testaments for the soldiers.⁷ Moriah Association, with whom contact was still kept, recommended in a message that the second Sabbath of each month at 10:00 a.m. be set apart for special prayers for our country and our soldiers. The account reads "Gloom was setting down on things." Even more distressing were the 1862 minutes. Meadow Branch delegates that year were J. Perry, S. Rowland, and J. C. Griffin. There were "no sermons, no collections and few people attended." The Committee on Requests and Queries made the following report October 11, 1862:

In looking over and examining the letters sent up to this Association by the different churches composing this body, we find in the greater number of them an earnest request that prayer may be made by the Association for them. We find in the general features of the letters . . . and impressive of deep feeling, a voice of mourning, lamen-

tation, and woe. They bring up afresh to our minds that we are in the midst of a cruel war, and point to the fact that some of their loved ones have fallen by, and some of them are even yet exposed to the ravages of war.⁸

If the association met in 1863 and 1864, the records and minutes were lost. It was not until 1866 that church conferences at Meadow Branch were again held regularly. In 1867 the associational meeting was held at Meadow Branch with only a few people attending. “. . . the weather was very disagreeable,” but nothing was noted about home or foreign missions.

An interesting matter was recorded in the minutes of Meadow Branch Church for August 1863. A certificate was read from A. L. Stowe (probably a Confederate chaplain) certifying that he had baptized W. H. Trull, Thomas S. Trull, and A. W. H. Price near Fredericksburg, Virginia, on the twentieth day of May and stating that it was their desire to be received by the Meadow Branch Church. They were immediately accepted. The war had not destroyed the love of these men for God and their home church.

There were indeed reasons for Meadow Branch's survival. Many years later in 1917, C. J. Black, pastor, wrote in an article in the *Monroe Journal* that revivals had always played a vital role in that church's history. They were almost always held in August (lay-by time, when farmers “laid by” their crops awaiting harvest). Black said in the article that “nearly all the great moves in our church life were begun in a revival.”⁹ It was recorded in August 1866 that during a ten-day protracted meeting thirty persons were added to the church by baptism. A sermon preached by Elder Davis in 1871 caused 120 persons to request prayer. Half of these joined the church afterwards. On one occasion, a meeting had been going on for several days with no manifestation of interest. At the noon hour the deacons met and decided it was best to close the meeting and ask Davis, their pastor, to preach the closing sermon, since he had not yet preached during the meeting. When Davis heard the announcement, he walked into the woods all alone. As the congregation began to sing, he returned, took his place in the pulpit, and read the hymn “There is Power!” A prayer followed, and men wept under the influence of that prayer. Then followed a sermon that stirred the congregation to their depths. Men who had never before been moved cried for mercy and forgiveness. The meeting did not break up for a week.¹⁰

Indeed the spirit of these hardy people was not dead; it was only numbed by the trauma of the war and reconstruction. In eighteen years the membership of churches in the entire association increased from one thousand to two thousand. The church at Meadow Branch was beginning to come alive again. Thomas E. Williams was appointed clerk in 1867 on the resignation of H. Bivens. J. W. Griffen, H. Colens, and J. C. Watson were appointed deacons. Joseph Bennett and Joseph Bivens were ordained into the ministry in 1872. A building committee composed of Henry Bivens, John Griffin, James E. Williams, and J. Perry was appointed in May 1875. Doubtless the congregation was beginning to regain its progressive spirit.

Evidence that the church was still exercising its role as judge in cases of wrongdoing by its members was made clear in an 1875 case in which a member was cited for wife-abuse and then excluded. H. C. Moore was appointed church clerk, and the minutes reflected his careful scholarship. Apparently the church's policy requiring attendance of members at all services was causing some problems. After two absences a person was called before the church to give his excuses; if not acceptable, he or she was forthwith excluded. In March 1881 a committee was appointed to write to all members living at some distance to suggest that they take their letters to a church nearer them. About this same time, a member who had been dismissed for "distilling and selling spirituous liquor" appealed his case by promising to quit such activity if the church said it was wrong. He was forgiven. Several months later, a financial note of interest was included in the minutes: Joseph Bennett was paid \$1.25 for wine bought for the church, but he returned fifty-five cents to the treasurer. Apparently the price had gone down!

Six members were "rec'd for baptism" in September 1883 and "met at the water and were baptized" the same day. Today some of the older members of the church still remember stories of baptisms in Meadow Branch which ran nearby. A nine-day meeting the following year brought in three new members by baptism and a number of others by letter.

In 1884 the church agreed that one weekend of services a month was not sufficient, and Brother J. J. Beasley of Monroe was called to preach every fourth Sunday. This he did until his death in 1886, at which time the church sent resolutions to his family, the *Biblical Recorder*, and the *Monroe Enquirer* expressing their sorrow at the death of this devout man.

In the meantime the building committee worked diligently and in 1883-84 a new church house stood some distance west of the 1856 structure. The old building was sold to the school district in 1886 and moved to the southeast corner of the church property. A deed was made in February 1886 for "100 ft. of land around the old church to the school committee of that district as long as it is kept as a public school house." It still was a school in 1896 when the Wingate School was started. Before completion and dedication of the new church house in 1886 (located between U. S. Highway 74 and the railroad) the building committee had grown. We read the following in a later history:

"... the following brethren as Building Committee: N. W. Bivens, T. A. Williams, M. B. Simpson, William Perry, Thomas E. Williams, M. W. Griffin, J. W. Bivens, A. C. Davis and E. W. Griffin. Three of this committee, William Perry, Thomas E. Williams, and E. W. Griffin are living (1931) and interested in the church. This building was dedicated on the fourth Sunday in July, 1886. Rev. J. J. Beasley was appointed to preach to sermon, but was sick. The service was held by Rev. E. L. Davis and Rev. J. A. Bivens."

The greater part of the actual construction of the building was done by N. W. Bivens and J. W. Chaney. The pulpit was a gift of Wm. E. Williams, "a man of primitive faith but with high ideals of Christianity."¹² The older members of the present church (1984) remember the old building well. Many professed their faith and became church members in it. Some remember being baptized in Womble's pond. All remember well that the church had two front doors. Men used one and sat on the left side of the sanctuary, and women used the other and sat on the right side. But let us look at a description by Eugene Ashcraft, excerpted from one of his columns in the *Monroe Enquirer* published in 1933:

The old building was locked, but peeping in the broken windows of the old-time church, deserted for a larger and handsomer house of worship, I saw the blue dome with the red stripes all around and the yellow curve of the ceiling which when finished some forty years ago was the last word in architecture and of the painter's handiwork.

But the old-time, unyielding and straight back seats were missing, having no doubt been removed in order to make a basket ball court for the boys and girls of Wingate Junior College. In memory I recalled the uncompromising railing that was nailed tightly atop of the middle section of the seats from rear door to pulpit. The men and boys

occupied the left side, while the women, babies and girls the right. It was considered a breach for either sex to ever occupy the side of the building other than that fixed by the elders when the church was built. Why the men occupied the left side of the house and the women the right I never could understand. But I do know that the good lookin' girls and their bashful beau(s) invariably found places right jam up against that separatin' railin'.

In the olden days there were only monthly services at Meadow Branch, these being invariably held on the second Sundays of the month. And who throughout the country hasn't heard of the Big Meetings at Meadow Branch, always on the second Sunday in August? That was a time when boys and girls who had reached the "age of accountability" were expected to get religion. No child could join until he or she had reached that time of "accountability." Whatever that age might be I have never been able to learn. In passing I will say most churches nowadays will accept recruits at almost any age they can induce them to join — from cradle up.

But often Saturday afternoons before the first Sunday proved interesting sessions at Meadow Branch. If brother had aught against brother, then more often than not, embarrassing moments were in store for the brother or sister who had not trod the straight and narrow path. Happily, however, in most cases, the erring brother or sister would humbly ask forgiveness, and which invariably brought the admonition to go and sin no more.

Observing the spreading branches of the fine old grove of Meadow Branch recalled the good times numerous young men and their sweeties had attending the big meetin'. There was always the picnic dinner at the noon hour and the walk to the spring thereafter. The young ladies and their mammas spread the food. Everyone was welcome and there was always plenty fried chicken, biscuit, cake and pie for all and to spare.

After filling up with this good food the afternoon service in the warm church proved a good dozing place, and most of the elderly men of the congregation took a nap.

But many of the younger set made hay while the sun shone. Top buggies were pulled under the shade trees, their rear wheels toward the church house. And in each of these buggies invariably could be found a pretty girl and her young man. "It was just too hot to set in church."

While I am writing reminiscently, mention should be made about prayin' for rain. If the meeting was being held during a spell of dry weather and corn and other crops likely to fail for lack of moisture, earnest prayer would be made "that the heavens might be opened and

refreshing showers descend." Well, sirs, strange to relate it always rained after a dry spell.

It was evident that the congregation felt a sense of responsibility, not only for the actions of its members but also to help them when in need. Three times in 1887 money was collected for those in financial difficulty; \$5.00 for an afflicted brother, \$6.96 for a sister to assist her in doctoring a cancer, and \$6.55 to a brother to help him replace his horse that had died.

"Protracted" meetings continued every year in "lay-by time" and delegates regularly attended the association meetings. A Sunday School convention was attended at Rock Rest. The statistics in the minutes of the fortieth anniversary meeting of the Union Baptist Association (formerly Brown Creek Union Association) afforded a broad look at the general state of Meadow Branch Church in 1894:

Sunday School

E. W. Griffin, Superintendent

Scholars, officers and Teachers	156
Contributions	\$11.13

Financial Table

Pastor's salary	\$221.22
Church Expenses	65.75
Baptist Orphanage	10.14
State Missions	14.59
Home Missions	9.92
Foreign Missions	7.06
Minute Fund	3.20
	<hr/>
Total	\$331.88
	<hr/> <hr/>

(Monroe and Sandy Ridge were the only churches in the association that exceeded that total of contributions.)

Statistical Table

Pastor E. L. Davis	By Letter	4
Clerk H. C. Moore	Dismissed by letter	12
	Deceased	1
Preaching 2nd Sabbath	Males	92
Baptized 4	Females	136
None were excluded	Total mem.	228

Meadow Branch Church was furnishing more than her share of leaders of the Union Association during that 1894 anniversary year. H. E. Copple was moderator; J. W. Bivens, treasurer; and Hight C. Moore, chairman of the executive board, on which J. W. Bivens also served. J. W. Outen, J. B. Outen, and M. D. L. Preslar were the messengers from the church. Hight C. Moore presented the report on education to the meeting. For its next session the association, although having several other invitations, chose to meet at Meadow Branch and named Hight C. Moore to preach the introductory sermon. Elder J. B. Richardson, at the time serving as assistant pastor at Meadow Branch, led in prayer twice during the meeting.

Elder Davis, pastor at Meadow Branch for so many years, was beginning to age, and in the last four years of his ministry, he was assisted by J. J. Beasley, J. A. Bivens, J. S. Snyder, and J. B. Richardson. The latter became pastor in 1896. Much could be said about the work of E. L. Davis; however, no greater tribute can be paid than that which was written by J. W. Bivens and published in the Union Association Minutes of 1896:

Edmund Lillie Davis was born in Anson County, N. C. February 19, 1813 and died at his home in Union County, N. C. June 6th, 1896. He was the fifth or sixth of ten brothers, sons of Isham Davis, who came from Virginia to North Carolina in 1790. He had also twin sisters.

At eighteen he was gloriously converted, his conviction of sin having been so deep that he never knew where he spent the night before he was brought (as he so often said) "from darkness into the glorious light and liberty of the gospel."

He was baptized into the fellowship of Lawyer Springs Primitive Baptist church on the first Sunday in September 1830 by Rev. John Culpepper, Jr.

Soon afterward he felt impressed to preach the gospel; but scarcely knowing the alphabet and being unable to read, he shrank from the work. Deepening convictions of duty, however, led him to enter, in April 1831, that active ministerial life which covered more than three score years.

When division occurred among the Primitive Baptists he joined the Missionary Baptists and became a thoroughly aggressive and evangelical worker. He served as pastor, quite a number of churches, mostly in the counties of Union and Anson. His longest and most successful pastorate was that of the Meadow Branch Church, which lasted almost continuously for over 40 years. During that time, he baptized about 500 persons into the fellowship of that church. Many other churches were largely built up and several established through his labors.

He was also an evangelist of great power. In 1856 nearly 400 people were brought into the churches under his ministry. In 1871 he preached a sermon that moved 120 persons to ask for prayer, and 60 of these afterwards joined the church, attributed their conviction to that sermon. In the same year, he preached a sermon on the Prodigal Son, and there were 11 conversions while he was preaching. Many other such instances might be cited.

In 1870 he was elected Moderator of the Brown Creek (now the Union Association), which position he held, with two exceptions, for 14 consecutive years. For several years he was a member of the State Mission Board of the North Carolina Baptist Convention, performing faithfully the duties thereof.

He was married four times — first to Miss Mary Newsome, then to Mrs. Susan Gaddy, nee Bennett, a sister to Hon. R. T. Bennett; then to Mrs. Martha Grady, nee Gaddy; and last to Mrs. Sarah Yarborough, nee Hamilton, with whom he lived 23 years and who died only two months before he himself was called away. He was the father of 12 children, 9 of whom preceded him to the grave. Among those living is Rev. A. C. Davis, a prominent minister in the Union Association.

Unquestionably, he was a great man. His oratory though rugged, was direct and effectual, once in 1865 evoking a spontaneous shout from Rev. John Monroe at the Pee Dee Association; and in 1872, calling forth at the Baptist State Convention the unqualified admiration of Drs. C. T. Bailey, T. H. Pritchard and John A. Broadus.

He was a man of deep, decided convictions and immense force of character. Of unshaken honesty, unwavering integrity and unsullied honor, he commanded universal respect. He was a born leader, brave, determined, aggressive and wise.

While his keen sympathies made him the champion of the poor and down trodden, he was also an ardent hater of the wrong, and his unscathing invectives, uttered on the spur of the moment, are scarcely paralleled in denunciatory eloquence.

He was a close observer and industrious student of men and things of nature and the Bible. Above all, he was a devout and humble Christian, liberal to a fault, sincere in his inner life and faithful in the discharge of his ministerial duties.

Having fought a good fight and kept the faith and finished his course, he entered into that rest that remaineth to the people of God. A revered citizen, an upright neighbor, and affectionate husband and parent, a bold patriot, and aggressive leader, and fearless preacher, a faithful pastor, a genuine man. "He rests from his labors and his works do follow him."

With the death of Elder Davis an era came to an end.

J. B. Richardson became the new pastor, and new horizons opened. Not the least of these was the founding of Wingate School.

CHURCH ROLL 1870-1895

(This was apparently a cumulative roll for that period.)

Names of Males

J. C. Williams	Nathaniel Bivens	George Hudspath
John Williams	James Austin	M. D. Lockburt
Wilson Williams	Herley G. Price	Jes Duncan
Sherwood Rowland	Berry Medlin	Willie E. Carelock
Asa Bivens	H. (?) Bivens	J. T. Williams
Henry Burnette	Dan Medlin	B. C. Ashcraft
Ervin Rowland	Culpepper Austin	? Webb
Thomas Morris	Jonathan Austin	Marcus D. Austin
George S. Huston	Tristan Perry	Bright Griffin
Bryant Williams	P. M. Stewart	Rufus Williams

J. A. Bivens
 Wm. Bivens
 John B. Stegall
 Hampton Griffin
 Wiley Pope
 Samuel Moore
 Stephen Webb
 Joseph Bennette
 Thomas Benton
 James H. Trull
 Joseph Griffin
 Thomas W. Griffin
 Jessie C. Griffin
 Thomas Sikes
 John Q. Griffin
 Thomas Trull
 A. W. H. Price
 A. G. R. Nance
 D. F. Webb
 David Bat (?)
 E. W. Griffin
 Thomas Perry
 William Williams
 Egbert Bivens
 Thomas Williams
 Mustin Price
 Thomas Brooks
 Thomas E. Williams
 Myers Medlin

N. W. Maness
 H. E. Copple
 W. (?) Gardner
 Mack Helms
 J. V. Williams
 H. G. McBride
 J. (?) Bivens
 J. A. Williams
 Estell Williams
 W. Baxter Williams
 J. Baxter Williams
 William Chaney
 Thomas J. Griffin
 Rev. J. A. Bivens
 Sullen (?) Bennett
 Edger Axum
 Thos. R. Liles
 ? Maske
 Churley (?) Bivens
 M. N. Bivens
 Bryant Austin
 Elic Stegall
 Vernon Griffin
 William Perry
 James M. Griffin
 Harley Thomas
 Thomas Bivens
 J. Kemp Bivens
 Wriston Hamilton

James C. Moore
 Jeremiah Perry
 Elder E. L. Davis
 R. L. Bivens
 Craven Bivens
 Alexis Chaney
 James T. Duncan
 Wilton Williams
 Craven W. Williams
 J. Hurley Griffin
 Frederick Lockhurt
 Jeff Lockhurt
 Thomas M. Williams
 George B. Simpson
 J. W. Hughes
 Henry W. Moore
 Clayton Ashcraft
 Alexis Perry
 J. L. Austin
 Wriston Lee
 N. C. Bivens
 Alexis Moore
 John B. Bass

Colored Males

Sam Trull
 Jack Bivens

Note: There were six other names in the above list which could not be read.

Names of Females

Sarah May
 Nancy Williams
 Martha Williams
 Eliza Jerome
 Rody Simpson

Emaline Bass
 Ann Austin
 Martha J. Bivens
 Martha R. Bigers
 Martha J. Griffin

Minie A. Griffin
 Alice Jones
 Willie Furr
 Leah May
 Bettie Bivens

Ellen Mask
 Mary Presler
 Sara J. Bass
 Sison Austin
 Marium Williams
 Mary Moore
 Bida Ashcraft
 Margaret Moore
 Elizabeth Pope
 Ann Philmon
 Pheby Medlin
 Elizabeth Philby
 Beaula (?) Presler
 Eliza Trull
 Elizabeth Cason
 Mary Ross
 Elen Helms
 Hester Stegall
 Francis Stegall
 Sarah Trull
 Martha Benton
 Margaret Griffin
 Charlotte Austin Trull
 Perrila Griffin Austin
 Elizabeth Sikes
 Jane Brooks
 Mary Liles
 Martha Bennett
 Mary A. Griffin
 N. C. Bivens Hamilton
 Margaret Treadaway
 Thetis Griffin
 Sara Griffin
 Elizabeth Griffin
 Ellen Bivens
 Annis Rogers
 Ellen Bivens
 Rody Austin
 Mary E. Bennette

Elizabeth Wadkins
 Sary Pope
 Jane Webb
 J. F. Austin
 Them A. Bass
 Ellen Williams
 Elisabeth Hamilton
 Sarah Adcock
 P. V. Bivens Griffin
 Janice Perry
 Martha Walls
 Martha Perry
 Mary Griffin
 Alice Bass
 Margret Bivens
 Hettie (?) Gardner
 Bettie Hamilton
 Ellen C. Williams
 D. A. Griffin Chaney
 Hasletine Williams Griffin
 Mary E. Williams Griffin
 Phitney L. Bivens
 Jane Baker
 M. A. Williams
 Sophronia A. Carelock
 B. G. Carelock
 Frances Helms
 Mary (?)
 Pursilla Haney
 Hattie Lockhart Mask
 ? Lockhart Williams
 M. L. Moore
 Sarah H. Simpson
 Heneretta Gardner
 Sarah Hamilton
 R. E. Hamilton Long
 O. A. Williams Lee
 Mittie Bivens
 Alice Gaddy Griffin

Dora V. Jerome
 Drusilla Griffin Simpson
 N. E. May
 Margaret Williams Tyson
 Nancy (?) Austin Mullis
 Dora Simpson Brooks
 Cleone Williams
 F. C. Hamilton
 E. Outen
 Dorcas Griffin
 Marissa Moore Green
 Carie Martin
 Alie Medlin
 Samanthie Bass
 Hariet Trull
 Minnie Chaney Bivens
 Carenia Mullis
 Pricilla Thomas
 Ada L. Williams
 M. Ellen Hamilton Liles
 Mitte C. Hamilton
 Mary E. Moore Bennett
 Emma Hamilton Perry
 Nancy J. Austin
 Mittie Austin
 Penelope Austin
 Lydia A. Griffin
 Sarah J. Williams
 Margaret Griffin
 Elizabeth Williams
 Elizabeth Pool
 Jane E. Pool
 Loula Hamilton
 Anna Perry Hallman
 Jane Hamilton
 Mary Williams
 Nancy Thomas
 Ada H. Griffin
 Cora Perry Gaddy

Sarah M. Bennette
 Celina Stegall
 Esther Pope
 Martha L. Bass
 Emelie Stegall
 Edwina Medlin
 B. J. Philmon
 Rebecca Rowland
 L. M. Griffin
 Geneva Moore
 Frances Williams
 Josephine Medlin
 Cornlia Medlin
 Sarah C. Gaddy
 Duleena Stegall
 Thessa Perry
 Eliza Maske
 Jemima Helms
 Mary E. Bivens
 Margaret Rowland
 Rosh Gaddy
 Martha Brooks
 Elizabeth Helms
 Nancy Griffin
 Jane Austin
 Reney Griffin
 H. Mary Helms
 Harriet Trull
 Mrs. Thos Huntley
 Martha Brown
 Elizabeth Austin
 Sara Mask
 Cora Lockhart
 Martha Little
 Winnie Hill
 Emmeline Griffin
 Catherine McCollum
 Sarah Y. Davis
 Rebecca Mullis

Alice Bivens Williams
 Ellen Stegall
 Elizabeth Williams McBride
 Ellen Perry Stewart
 Elizabeth Davis
 Margaret Thomas
 Henrietta Medlin
 Mary A. Medlin
 Louisa Teel
 Martela Brooks
 Martha J. Williams Liles
 M. Annie Williams
 Martha T. Hamilton
 Mary Lenard
 Elizabeth Perry McBride
 Lisson E. Bivens Ross
 Mary R. Bivens
 Flo Gardner
 Lydia Perry
 Julia Williams Copple
 Emma E. Moore Baker
 Z. G. Williams Lee
 Emma Williams Summerlin
 Susanna Hamilton Griffin
 Elizabeth Hamilton Trull
 Margaret Hamilton
 Charlotte Hamilton
 Malissa Huff
 Mish B. Griffin
 Edy Privit
 Ophelia Ratliff
 Dorcas Trull
 Martha E. Bennett
 Mary Trull Bennett
 Miriam Gardner
 Mary Bivens
 Angeline Bennett
 Susan Gaddy
 Sarah Bennett

Sallie M. Chaney
 Thetus Bivens
 Ada Williams
 Glennie Axum
 Annie Williams
 Ida Perry
 L. G. Bennett
 Alice Webb
 Fexattis Bass
 Cora Bass Griffin
 Ellen C. Lockhart
 S. Eugenia Williams
 Emma Chaney
 Ila Bivens
 S. A. Brener Williams
 Annie Bivens
 Belle McCollum
 Mary L. Griffin
 Francis Williams
 Miss Loula Williams
 Miss Lillia Williams
 Lilley Griffin
 M. Ellen Williams
 Emeline Hudspeth
 Sarah Duncan
 Mary Medlin
 Sallie Hamilton
 Mary E. Williams
 Farind C. Bivens
 Louvis (?) Williams
 Mary E. Trull
 Mattie Griffin
 Annie May
 Daisey Duncan
 Maud Green
 Mamie Williams
 Carrie Bivens
 Flonnie Green
 Susan E. Moore

Levinia Bivens
Anne Ashcraft
Charlotte Lingle
Margaret Broom
Lydia Griffin

Lidia Medlin
Le Griffin
F. D. Smith
Adda M. Griffin

Annie Medlin
Lillie B. Simpson
Julia A. Copple
Julia Griffin

Note: The above list included five unreadable names.

Colored Females

Ann Medlin
Ester Trull
Moriah Perry

Note: There were also three unreadable names.

CHAPTER FOUR

1896-1920

A New Day — New Venture

We, your Board of Trustees of the Wingate School, beg leave to report: — It affords us pleasure to report the first session, '96-'97, in the history of your school a success.'

During the period of 1896-1922 Meadow Branch had ten pastors and assistants. Perhaps one of the most significant was the Reverend J. B. Richardson, "a godly man and a scholar,"² who served from 1892 to 1899. For four years of this period, he was assistant to the aging Brother E. L. Davis. It was during Richardson's ministry that the Union Baptist Association decided to establish a school. His influence was one of the reasons they carried through this undertaking and certainly a great factor in the final location of the school at Wingate. Let us trace this course of events.

In 1876 the twenty-second session of the Union Baptist Association met in Monroe, North Carolina, with E. L. Davis, Joseph A. Bivens, and C. Austin acting as delegates from Meadow Branch Church. Dr. J. B. Richardson, then corresponding secretary for the State Mission Board, was also in attendance. At this meeting a special hour to consider Christian Education was designated for the first time and a strong plea was made for the members to support the Christian education of their children in order that they might become knowledgeable about their

beliefs and the purpose of their lives.³ Later Richardson called the Wingate School his “child” because he had fully supported this report at the associational meeting. He was pastor at Meadow Branch when the following resolution was proposed in 1887 by the ministers of the association:

Dear Brethren: we believe that one of our greatest needs is the cultivation and proper training of the children and youths under our supervision. They can only be useful and efficient as they have the ability to do . . . We the ministers of the association do most heartily commend this work to our brethren.⁴

This was the real beginning of the associational school idea which would culminate in the establishment of the Wingate School.

Even before the pastors introduced their resolution, Rock Rest Academy and Union Institute, which were operating schools in the area, had each offered their grounds and existing buildings to the association if the association wished to “maintain a good school.” Without doubt, between 1876 and 1887 there was much discussion for and against the establishment of a school. Public education was at a very low ebb, with no schools available in this immediate area. The responsibility for establishing and maintaining a school was no small matter to people still suffering from the effects of the Civil War and reconstruction and the financial panic which rocked the country in 1893.

In spite of conditions, the Union Association passed the following resolution on the morning of October 12, 1895:

Resolved that Brethren J. W. Bivens, Rev. H. C. Moore, O. M. Sanders, W. W. Griffin, J. C. Sikes, B. F. Parker, and R. F. Beasley be appointed a board of trustees to secure, if possible without a debt on the association, suitable property within the bounds of the association and to establish and control an academy of high grade for the education of the boys and girls of this association and the surrounding country.⁵

The trustees first met in the Monroe Courthouse in the office of the Board of Education on October 29, 1895. J. W. Bivens was elected chairman and R. F. Beasley secretary. In spite of the offers from Rock Rest Academy and Union Institute to give their property, on November 15, 1895, with the full board present, they accepted G. M. Stewart's

donation of ten acres of land near Meadow Branch Church. A deed was made by Mr. Stewart conveying the property to the trustees, and plans were then submitted for a five-room building which the citizens of the community (known then as Ames Turnout) had agreed to erect on the Stewart property without cost to the association.⁶

There has been much speculation as to the reason the site at Meadow Branch was chosen. Certainly the offers of land and buildings already in use as schools at Rock Rest and Union had many advantages. The accessibility of the Ames Turnout site with both railroad and highway close by and the presence of an excellent spring of water were contributing factors. That Dr. J. B. Richardson was then pastor at Meadow Branch Church was also important. J. W. Bivens, a member of Meadow Branch and chairman of the Board of Trustees, was very influential in the area. R. F. Beasley and other members of the board had long association with the church, and some had been members of Meadow Branch. Probably the deciding factor was that the community itself wanted the school, and its people were willing to sacrifice for it. Very soon after the 1895 meeting the community began the erection of the school building. Daniel Mullis gave timber and labor; W. M. Perry, who operated the lumber plant, sawed and dressed the raw timber at no cost; John Watson, Thomas Lowery, and Tom Perry contributed timber. These and many others contributed material and free labor, and in 1896 the building was ready to receive the students coming to Wingate School.

The 1896 association meeting named the new school. Dr. E. W. Sikes, a former member of Meadow Branch Church and at this time a professor at Wake Forest College, suggested the school should be named "Wingate" in honor of Dr. Washington Manley Wingate, for many years president of Wake Forest.⁷ The association then chose a principal. M. B. Dry, who had received his master of arts degree from Wake Forest in June 1896, was unanimously elected principal of the school. He accepted the position with the promise of the members of the Board of Trustees that they individually would guarantee his salary.⁸

Professor Dry held this position for twelve years, during which time Wingate School became a well-established, recognized institution. Mr. Dry was held in enormous esteem by his students. Although his term of service was not long, his influence continues to the present. The "Dry students" held annual reunions until 1968 of which records were kept by Mrs. Mary Parker Helms and Mrs. Ellie Mullis Chaney. These two

women kept his memory alive and along with it that of the early days of the Wingate School. The last entry in their journal was dated 1969.⁹ For those many years, devoted students of Professor Dry returned to Wingate with treasured memories of its past and fond hopes for its future. They built the chapel in the lobby of the Austin-Webb Auditorium and dedicated it to his memory. Professor Dry was the first of an able, dedicated group of men and women who have been responsible for the existence and growth of Wingate School — later to become Wingate College.

During those early years the board of trustees of Wingate School made detailed reports each year to the association. Many of the reports were given by J. W. Bivens, who was instrumental in the founding and continued growth of the school. The following document, signed by Bivens in 1897, was the first report of the status of the new school given to the association:

ANNUAL REPORT OF ASSOCIATIONAL SCHOOL

We, your Board of Trustees of the Wingate School, beg leave to report:—

It affords us pleasure to report the first session, '96-'97, in the history of your school a success.

1. The attendance was good; the enrollment of students during the session having reached one hundred and seventy-five.
2. The work done in the school room by the teachers was most efficient and the progress of students most gratifying.
3. The session was not only a success as to numbers and work done, but a financial success also, as the following statement will show:

Tuition paid, \$689.14; due, \$145.94,	\$835.08
Salaries of teachers,	790.00
	<hr/>
Balance,	45.08
Incidental fees paid, \$29.85; due, \$8.90,	\$38.75
Incidental expenses,	27.26
	<hr/>
Balance,	11.49

So much for the work of last Session, which we consider an excellent record, when we remember how unfavorable were the conditions under which the session opened. Our school building not being com-

pleted, we began in an old school house. There were few accommodations. Boarding places were scarce, but amply supplied the demand as there was only one boarding student present at the beginning of the session. But there has been improvement all along the line until now we have a well supplied and conveniently arranged school building, and boarding facilities still amply supplying the demand, although forty or fifty boarding students were present before the session closed. In regard to the present status of the school, the attendance during the first quarter and work done has been most satisfactory. The total enrollment to date is one hundred and fifty-seven against one hundred and four to same time last year. About forty of these are boarding students.

The Trustees have every reason to believe that the finances of the institution will be satisfactory for the present session. Self sustaining from the beginning, our best hopes have been realized, and the arrangements for this session promise to provide sufficiently for the running expenses.

As to your property, we are glad to state that the school building has been improved during the past year by the addition of a porch extending across the entire front, the larger part of the ceiling has been completed, and two rooms have been furnished with improved single desks at a cost of \$156.91, of which amount \$89.35 is still due.

Regarding the plat of land (26 acres) on which we have an option, nothing has been done more than that about fifty dollars have been subscribed towards securing it. We have also secured a charter for the school which we herewith present to the Association. Upon the building we have taken insurance to the amount of \$600.

The Principal, Prof. M. B. Dry, than whom we have no higher type of Christian manhood, is ably aided by Miss Polly Crowder, who teaches music and assists in the primary department. The latter is a model of excellence for our young ladies, and the Trustees consider the school especially fortunate in having secured the services of these teachers.

Therefore, brethren, inasmuch as you have a school of your own which is the equal, if not the superior, of any school in the county, will you not give it your most ardent support, constantly praying that God's Spirit may direct your Board of Trustees, and that His divine blessing may rest upon the work done in this institution in preparing boys and girls for usefulness in life and service in the Master's kingdom!

J. W. BIVENS, Chairman Board of Trustees¹⁰

At this same meeting it was ordered that the charter of the Wingate School also be printed in the minutes. A copy may be found in the appendix.

The report to the Association in 1899, again signed by J. W. Bivens, stated that during the 1898-1899 school year, 208 students were enrolled. For a time J. C. Sikes, later an attorney and a mayor of the City of Monroe, was the sole boarding student (he boarded in the home of G. M. Stewart); all others were local. However, before the close of the session, there were thirty or forty students who boarded in Wingate. Professor Dry had one assistant teacher, Miss Mollie Scoggin of Reidsville, North Carolina. A library was established in this year with many donated books and some that had been bought. The sum of \$917.00 was received for tuition, from which the principal and teacher were paid salaries totaling \$849.87. The school rented a piano and bought, although payment was incomplete, twenty-six acres of land. The report asked for \$250 to pay off the debt incurred for seats purchased for the auditorium and the balance on the land. J. B. Richardson and E. W. Sikes spoke in favor of the report.¹¹

The year 1900, with 231 students enrolled, the Wingate School reported that an addition was being built, providing five new rooms for recitation, Music and Society Halls, at a cost of \$600, of which half had already been pledged. The hope was expressed that members of the association would pledge the remaining \$300.¹² The community and the congregation admired, then and now, those early leaders who would rent a piano and build facilities like the Society Halls where students could learn to stand on their feet and express themselves verbally, and who, because their vision went far beyond the present, ventured to buy more land.

The school reached a peak enrollment in 1904 with 292 students from sixteen counties in North and South Carolina. Then the state began setting up schools in the area, and that competition had its effect. From the very beginning the school struggled for existence, and the community and the Meadow Branch Church played a very important part in that struggle. By 1905-1906 it was reported that despite the effort:

The Wingate School now has 135 students, 53 of these are boarding students with five teachers. The school is self-sustaining. No call has been made on the association to meet running expenses.¹³

This report made to the Union Association also contained a plea for a dormitory and an enlargement of the main building. In this year the association turned over *The Baptist Messenger* to the Wingate Board of Trustees for the school to publish. M. B. Dry and W. C. Bivens were asked to take "Editorial Charge." Any profits were to belong to the school. Professor Dry became ill in 1906, and a new teacher, the Reverend C. A. G. Thomas, was engaged. It was asked that his salary be apportioned among the churches of the association. Professor Dry resigned in 1908, but the trustees were most fortunate in securing B. Y. Tyner and J. G. Carroll to serve as co-principals. Mr. Tyner stayed only a short time, but Professor Carroll remained for ten years, leaving his mark on many students in such a way that his influence has survived to this day. Through the years many have cherished the memory of J. G. Carroll as another of that select number who have served Wingate well.

November 13, 1911, was an historic day in the life of the new school. A new brick building, long anticipated, was dedicated. One-half of the \$12,000 cost of the building was contributed by the Wingate community. (By then the post office and railroad station bore that name instead of Ames Turnout.) Doubts and fears had existed concerning the future of the Wingate School, but the members of Meadow Branch Church and the Wingate community never shared them. So in 1911, as before and since then, they put their support and best efforts into keeping their dream alive. Without doubt this was an essential reason the Wingate School continued to live and grow.

Let us return to Meadow Branch and her activities in addition to helping establish and nurture the Wingate School. The minutes recorded that in 1897 N. W. Bivens was superintendent of the Sunday School, boasting that it was the largest in the association with 160 students and eleven teachers and meeting all twelve months of the year. The pastor, J. B. Richardson, was preaching on the second Sunday of each month at an annual salary of \$150. The church listed 292 members, thirty-seven of whom were added that year by baptism. The contributions of the church to state, home, and foreign missions, orphanages, and poor relief amounted to approximately \$140.

Meadow Branch continued to show awareness of the needs of others by establishing a branch of the Sunday School at Maple Springs in 1902 and deciding in December to share the expenses of an associational delegate to the Southern Baptist Convention. Each year the church carefully elected a clerk, treasurer, music leader, and Sunday

School superintendent. In 1903 the Reverend G. O. Wilhoit of Ansonville was called as pastor. That same year they took out insurance on the church building. Surprisingly, three women were appointed that year to try to collect the pledges. It was also recorded that a sexton was paid \$5.60 in 1903 for his services. Two years later, \$11.50 was raised to meet a ten-dollar assessment by the association to retire the debt of the Wingate School. Records of this period also showed a less rigid position concerning church absences. Members were taken to task only if they had not attended service during a six-month period.

The Reverend B. S. Funderburke was called in 1904 for an indefinite period to preach twice a month at the salary of \$300 per year. After having accepted the call, he found he could not come two Sundays each month because of previous commitments in Chesterfield, South Carolina. Several times during his tenure, services were cancelled because of rain or snow. In June 1906 the Reverend Funderburke attended the Southern Baptist Convention in Chattanooga. The church paid the pastor a salary of \$225 that year and contributed approximately \$240 to missions and charitable objects. The church's seating capacity was 600, and the membership number 336. None had been added by baptism that year, and the Sunday School had decreased to 150 with thirteen teachers and officers; J. W. Bivens was superintendent.¹⁴ November 9, 1907, the Reverend Funderburke resigned. The church immediately accepted his resignation and extended a call to W. F. Estridge of Waxhaw at \$200 a year. He served for only a part of a year, and in September 1908 the Reverend D. M. Austin was called at the increased salary of \$300.

Careful plans were laid for celebrating the centennial of the Meadow Branch Church. The committee included E. W. Griffin, S. A. Williams, T. E. Williams, and J. W. Bivens. It was decided to hold the meeting on July 20, 1910, and Dr. E. W. Sikes of Wake Forest, a former member of Meadow Branch, was chosen as speaker for the occasion.

Facts and dates, while authentic, can in no way convey the spirit of this homecoming as well as does the written account by J. W. Bivens. It is therefore printed in full, although it repeats some of the events already described.

July 20, 1910

MEADOW BRANCH CENTENNIAL

**The One Hundredth Birthday of the Church Celebrated in Fine Style —
Dr. Sikes Gives a Notable History of the Hundred Years of Activity**

Meadow Branch Church, situated five miles East of Monroe, near which has grown up the thriving village of Wingate, was founded one hundred years ago. Last Wednesday the Church celebrated the day of its hundredth anniversary, and the day was enjoyable to the large gathering of more than a thousand people that assembled there. Among the varied exercises of the day the principal feature was the address of Dr. W. E. Sikes of Wake Forest College, giving the history of the Church so far as he had been able to gather it from the records and from the oldest living witnesses. Dr. Sikes is the man most fitted of all to do this and the Church did well in asking him to make the address. He is fond of historical research and is trained in the work. And he is particularly interested in the Meadow Branch Church for like most of the congregation that gathered there on last Wednesday, his own ancestors were among the old members and founders of the Church. After devotional exercises in the morning the Clerk, Mr. Vann Williams, called a roll of the names of all members who had belonged to the church since 1835. Beyond this date the records do not go. Since that date there have been 1,018 names enrolled. In the afternoon, Mr. J. W. Bivens, superintendent of the Sunday School, gave a history of the (Sunday) school, which began in 1845, with Mr. W. J. T. Maske as Superintendent. C. Austin and John C. Williams were among the early superintendents and in later years N. W. Bivens, E. W. Griffin and M. B. Dry.

Among the former pastors who were present were Rev. Messrs. Thomas Carrick, J. A. Bivens, J. S. Snyder and the present pastor, Rev. D. M. Austin. Other living ministers who have been pastor of the Church but were unable to be present are B. S. Funderburk, G. W. Wilhoit, W. F. Estridge, J. B. Richardson.

At the noon hour one of the finest picnic dinners ever spread in Union county was placed on a table stretching away under the trees for a hundred and forty feet. Not only was it abundantly loaded, but the food was all nicely prepared, showing that the ladies of that community are

experts. After the dinner, to which all were invited, whether home folks or stranger — and more than a thousand must have eaten — many said that as much food was left as had been eaten by the hungry multitude. It was a great occasion and well did the people enjoy it. The paper of Dr. Sikes follows:

Speech of Dr. Sikes

At this late date it seems impossible to determine who were the first Baptists in Union county. The records I have seen indicate that the earliest Baptist church was called Lanes Creek, sometimes Lewellyn's and was established in 1793. There seems to have been two streams of Baptist influence pouring into Union County — one from South Carolina which established this church and the other from North Carolina which founded Rocky River in 1776, Gourdvine and Richardson's Creek (now extinct) and Meadow Branch in 1810. Many of the people who settled in the Meadow Branch community came from Baptist sections in the east.

In 1810 it was decided to found a church and call it Meadow Branch. The place selected was on the Concord-Camden road one mile North of Wingate. There on that sloping hillside covered with giant oaks that knew not the woodsman's axe, and near a purling stream, Elders John Bennett and Joseph Williams and others who had brought letters from Gourdvine established the ancient temple of God. Here your ancestors and mine one hundred years ago made the welkin ring as they, hardy frontiersmen that they were, felled the trees and hewed the logs for the first structure.

In 1815 the Moriah Association was organized, consisting of churches in both the Carolinas: Meadow Branch was one of the charter members along with Lanes Creek and Gourdvine.

The annals of the church are brief for twenty years. About 1827 there began to grow up a dispute in the Baptist churches about the method of spreading the Gospel. Division took place in various sections of the State in both Associations and churches. In 1830 the issue reached Meadow Branch church. Feelings ran high on the subject, it seemed that it would tear the church asunder. The two factions were about equally divided. They tried to compromise, but failed. In 1834 the church called Elder Brasington to be its pastor. He refused to come to a church so divided. In 1835 they decided to divide and called for the aid of Elders Jacob Helms, Jake Lewellyn and Solomon

Marsh. They refused to aid in the division and urged them to get together and live in peace. The church then set apart a day for prayer and fasting that they might have divine guidance in settling their dispute. But nothing availed. Then they decided to divide and let the majority hold the house of worship. They withdrew and began to worship at Griffin's school house.

Having settled this dispute, the church began a new life — with fewer members but with greater unity. The Moriah Association delegated a Committee consisting of Elders Gullledge, Mason and Brasington to reorganize the church and prepare rules of decorum.

Joel Gullledge was called to be pastor at a salary of twenty-five dollars a year. He lived in the White Store section, was very faithful in the performance of his duties and remained for two years. The church sent its delegates regularly to the Moriah Association. These delegates were generally Lemuel Williams, John Griffin and Enoch Sikes.

In 1838 the church called the strong, vigorous, wide-awake John Culpepper, of Montgomery county to be the pastor. He was in thorough touch with the progressive spirit of the age and was the personal friend of Wait, founder of Wake Forest College and Meredith, founder of the Biblical Recorder. He had served three terms in the United States Congress and was a charter member of the Board of Trustees of Wake Forest Institute. He was pastor of Rocky River church for over forty years. He remained at Meadow Branch only two years — 1838-1840.

The next pastor was Elder William A. Morris. He lived in Anson county, and like Gullledge and Culpepper, was pastor for two years 1840-42. Under him the first record is found of a contribution to State missions.

The next pastor was Elder J. F. Lee. He was not a native of the county, but through Virginia had come from New York. In point of learning and intellectual equipment he was strong man of the community. He was very influential and had been clerk of the Moriah Association. He was popular as a preacher and great crowds flocked to hear him. But after three years he and the church disagreed on some doctrinal question and their relationship was severed. He lived in the county many years afterwards as a respected and much beloved physician.

The next pastor was Elder E. C. Williams. He had grown up in the church and for many years had been clerk. His records are unusually well kept. He was pastor for nine years 1846-1855. Under his admin-

istration the records show that the church was active in the support of both State and Foreign missions. New members came with letters, among them the Benton's from Rocky River and some from Griffin's from Brown Creek.

In 1845 the first Sunday School was started. The book used was the spelling book; the school lasted all day, men, women and children attending.

In 1852 an arm of the church was established at Spring Hill.

In 1855 the church building was blown down. It was decided to rebuild one mile further south on the same road where the church now stands. When the church was finished Elder E. L. Davis was called to the pastorate a position he held thirty-six years 1856-1892. At the beginning of his ministry the church withdrew from the Moriah Association and helped to organize the Brown Creek.

With E. L. Davis a period of great revivals began. In 1857 he had a great meeting and added forty-five to the church. Maj. D. A. Covington reported to the Recorder the baptismal scene in Richardson's Creek and said it reminded him of John the Baptist on the banks of the Jordan. This was the beginning of this man's great work in Union County.

He had been baptized by Culpepper in 1830. Up to this time he had never seen anyone baptized or join the church. He could not read, but he seemed to hear a voice saying continually, "Behold my people as sheep without a shepherd." He determined to preach and was ordained in 1837. He began to study the New Testament and to spell it out word by word. He was looking for no creed, no argument, simply the will of God. From such a man God does not long conceal Himself. But the young man did not follow after his progressive teacher, John Culpepper. The young man would have nothing to do with the missionary movement. But in 1844 he heard Solomon Snider, a new convert to the missionary ideas. When Snider had finished, Davis said, "If that be missionary doctrine I am one of them." He joined the missionaries at once. The acquisition of two such strong men as Solomon Snider and Edmund Davis was encouraging to the cause in Union county, and again the Recorder rejoices.

In 1871 he preached a sermon that caused one hundred and twenty persons to ask for prayer, sixty of whom afterwards joined the Church. On one occasion a meeting had been going on for several days with no manifestation of interest. At the noon hour the deacons met and decided that it was best to close the meeting and that they would ask the pastor Davis to preach the closing sermon since he had not

preached any during the meeting. He heard the announcement; he was seen to walk off to the woods all alone; and he returned only when the congregation began to sing. He took his place in the pulpit and read the hymn: there was power. A prayer followed and men wept under that prayer. Then followed a sermon that stirred the congregation to its depth; men who had never been moved before cried for mercy and forgiveness. The meeting did not break up but continued for a week.

These are but few of the great services held here under him. He was a gifted man who knew not the meaning of fear. His face was rugged like the face of a scarred mountain cliff, and yet when that great mellow voice began to talk on his favorite theme, "The fulness of the Gospel of Christ" and to describe God's welcome to the repentant sinner, it was easy for men to weep.

His ministry is recently ended and is well known. Many additions were made to the Church and many letters granted for the formation of other churches. Shiloh was formed in 1847 and Faulks in 1851 and Monroe a little later.

In his later years he was assisted by that lovable minister of a gentle Gospel, Rev. J. A. Bivens. Since then the church has had four pastors, Revs. J. B. Richardson, Thomas Carrick, W. O. Wilhoit, W. S. Funderburk and D. M. Austin. Their work is too modern for the historian.

Meadow Branch had a proud past to celebrate in that centennial service, but not all was going well in the church with seven pastors serving between 1899 and 1914. The minutes were filled with requests for letters, and some simply asked that their names be deleted from the church roll. Frequently the pastor failed to appear for services, and often inclement weather forced cancellation.

A later account written in 1918 described the situation:

Divisions began to arise and it looked as if things were going to be bad, but the church got things somewhat together and called Rev. D. M. Austin to supply until they could get a permanent pastor . . . they called C. J. Black — he took charge November 1914. The church has done well since his pastorate began, but not what it might have done. There are too many factions and too many trivial things in a man's way to accomplish what ought to be done here. We hope that things may soon take a turn for the better here, and that this old church may become what she ought to, one of the leading churches in the state. She has a splendid citizenship to support her and a people well educat-

ed to carry on her Sunday School, and all the agencies of the kingdom. I suppose this church has about as many college men and women in it as any country church in the state. May she broaden her horizon, have a new vision, and get to work in dead earnest during these latter days.¹⁵

No men were so well informed of the history of Meadow Branch Church or as hopeful for its future as C. J. Black, J. A. Bivens, and M. D. L. Preslar, who wrote the above account. One had been its pastor, another a lifelong active member, and the third a former pastor and a resident of the community. Their report should be accepted as truthful and accurate.

The Union Association met at Meadow Branch October 8, 9, and 10, 1912. The messengers (no longer called delegates) from Meadow Branch were E. W. Griffin, J. G. Carroll, and J. C. McIntyre. J. W. Bivens was historian. The report showed that Meadow Branch Missionary Society contributed \$115 that year. The Sunday School membership of 411 was the largest by far of any in the association, but baptisms, only 3, fell far behind. Total membership was 336. Preaching was being held twice monthly, on the second and fourth Sundays. A total budget of \$1,101.60 was exceeded in the association only by the Monroe church.

The Reverend C. J. Black began his ministry at Meadow Branch November 9, 1914, preaching twice monthly. The envelope system of giving had just been inaugurated. When a protracted meeting was held in March 1915 with Pastor Black doing the preaching, thirty souls were saved and added to the church roll. In November of that year the call to the pastor was made indefinite, instead of the customary annual call. That winter, for the first time, money was paid for cutting wood for fuel. Men of the church had contributed this labor in earlier years. Prayer services on Wednesday nights were begun in June 1915, and the church decided in August to conduct two Sunday services, one at 11:00 a.m. and the second at 1:30 p.m. Over \$60 was raised to buy a church bell.

The church minutes faithfully remind us of members being reprimanded for profane language, intoxication and failure to attend service. Most of them repented and were forgiven. Only a few were excluded. The church was becoming less rigid in its code for membership. Concern for the unfortunate was ever present. June 10, 1916, the church voted to take a collection for the poor each time the Lord's Supper was observed.¹⁶ A sad fact was emphasized in August 1917 when it was decided that no more burial lots were available in the church

cemetery. Only those whose families already had plots could be buried there. The church, however, was very much alive that year. In March, twenty-one joined, and another eleven were added in the August meeting. It is to be noted that the roll call in the minutes of May 12, 1917, included only male members. A song book, *Treasury of Songs*, was selected that year and paid for by the Sunday School. "Collectors" were appointed to canvas for the pledges not yet paid.

C. J. Black resigned in 1918, but on the insistence of the congregation, he agreed to stay one more year. Prayers were offered during the service for a member not "living right." Related to this concern for members' behavior, the next year the church returned to its old custom of having members appear in person "concerning offenses" instead of sending another person to do so. In October 1918 services were called off due to the "Spanish Influenza Situation."

The progress of the Wingate School was noted in the report it made to the 1916 meeting of the Union Association which stated that the school's physical plant was valued at \$20,000. The following glowing account was given by Mr. B. C. Ashcraft:

Eighteen years have passed since the motion was made on this floor to establish the school. It seems but yesterday since it was done and yet the children of the first students of the Wingate School are now on its roll. During these eighteen years hundreds of young men and young women have been its students, the low cost of tuition and board enabling them to secure high school training, and from its walls many splendid young men and young women have gone out to fight the battles of life as they never could have done had it not been for the Wingate School. It had kindled the spark of ambition in the life of many a boy and girl as it never would have been kindled had it not been for this institution, and they have been sent out into a larger world than they would have known had it not been for this school.

The Wingate School had paid large dividends in developed manhood and womanhood.

Every year there is an improvement in the general success of the school. Those of us who know of the lives of many of the good students in this State and in South Carolina who have gone out from The Wingate School understand, in a measure, something of its service and its usefulness, but when you start a young man or a young woman on the right road, when you set a light aglow in a young mind, when you touch in the right way a young life, eighteen years is too short a time to put any estimate on the good done, for influences are not to be measured by years — they are eternal.

Yes, it has paid.

Is the Wingate School making good now?

The enrollment last year was 353 and 112 of these were boarding students. This year the enrollment, up to the present time, is 15 in excess of that of last year at this date. Last year there were six ministerial students. Sixteen counties were represented last year.

No school of like grade, in this State, it is the opinion of the writer, is better equipped in teaching force than is the Wingate School. Its corps of teachers consists of seven college trained men and women of splendid Christian character — teachers who have the interest of their students at heart — teachers who want the lives of their students made clean as well as their minds trained to do life's larger work. Your investment in the Wingate School is not being wasted.

.....
The Wingate School is in debt. The sum of \$9,000 is still due on the building; the sum of \$3,849.75 is secured by note and by subscription, leaving a balance of \$5,150.25.

The Union Association has at its former sessions stood by the trustees of the Wingate School, has given them the encouragement of friendly words of commendation, and that is appreciated by those upon whose shoulders this debt rests heaviest, but it takes more than mere good words of cheer to pay debts. Here is the school. It shows for itself. The writer has tried to show something of its record. Shall the debt be paid? If an institution burdened by debt, as the Wingate School is, has done so much, should its hands be untied and should it not be given a fighting chance free from debt?

We have asked no rich philanthropist to help pay this debt nor should we do so, for this property should be owned by the Association which founded it. It is worth saving.

B. C. ASHCRAFT

In addition to the Wingate School, Meadow Branch developed in this period an additional manner to emphasize missions and to mobilize the strength of its women members. The Woman's Missionary Society had become an important part of the Meadow Branch Church. It was first mentioned in 1897 when it was organized by Mrs. L. C. Bennett of Wadesboro, North Carolina, with Mrs. Bessie Benton as president and Miss Polly Crowder as secretary-treasurer. Evidently no records were kept or they were misplaced, but as remembered by some of the women, the other charter members were: Mrs. J. W Bivens, Mrs. G. M. Stewart, Mrs. J. B. Boyd, Mrs. D. W. Mullis, Mrs. M. W. Griffin, Mrs. T. B.

Liles, Mrs. Addie Joplin, and Mrs. Enoch Griffin.¹⁷ There was a Ladies' Aid Society meeting in 1907 with twenty-eight present and Mrs. T. W. Maness serving as president and Miss Della Evans as secretary. In 1909 a group of women met to reorganize the mission society and elected Mrs. B. Y. Tyner president, Mrs. S. W. Hinson vice-president, Miss Janie Bivens secretary, and Miss Fronie Perry treasurer. Dues were set at ten cents a month, and meetings were to be held the second Saturday afternoon of each month. The following roll was found with the minutes of the first meeting:

Mrs. J. L. Austin	Miss Sadie Howard	Miss Sue Mae Parker
Mrs. J. W. Bivens	Mrs. T. K. Helms	Mrs. James Connell
Mrs. Edna Bivens	Mrs. Addie Joplin	Mrs. Dora Rushing
Miss Janie Bivens	Miss Ruth Joplin	Mrs. E. C. Snyder
Mrs. J. L. Bennett	Mrs. Thos. Liles	Mrs. Mary Sherin
Miss Mary Bryan	Mrs. Livia Mullis	Mrs. G. M. Stewart
Miss Dora Crowell	Miss Ellie Mullis	Mrs. B. Y. Tyner
Mrs. J. L. Chaney	Mrs. J. W. Outen	Miss Jennie Tucker
Miss Georgia Carroll	Miss Lillie Outen	Mrs. Sallie Williams
Miss Della Evans	Mrs. J. B. Outen	Mrs. T. M. Williams
Mrs. Henry Griffin	Mrs. Jesse Perry	Mrs. T. E. Williams
Mrs. Moke Griffin	Miss Mattie Perry	Mrs. Lemuel Watson
Miss Mattie Gaddy	Miss Fronie Perry	Mrs. O. P. Wimberly ¹⁸
Mrs. S. W. Hinson		

Also with those first minutes was a list of donors to a loan fund in honor of Mrs. Wilton Williams and a list of library books on the subject of missions. There followed an excellent set of minutes covering the meetings of the Meadow Branch Missionary Society from 1909 to 1956. A meticulous record was kept of meetings, including the names of the new members and the programs that covered the world scope of the Baptist mission effort. Collections were taken for every phase of this effort as well as for state and local benevolences. In 1913 the yearly report showed there were seven new members and contributions to home missions of \$20.00, foreign missions \$25.50, state missions \$12.50, and a Christmas gift of \$18.00 to China. Subscriptions were listed to the following periodicals: *Biblical Recorder*, *Foreign Mission Journal*, and *Home Field*. The women were also concerned to provide mission education for the children of the church. As early as 1911 the Meadow

Branch Sunbeams gave \$8.45 to mission projects. In 1916 the Women's Missionary Society had thirty members, the Sunbeams fifty, and the Young Woman's Auxiliary thirty-eight. Mrs. C. M. Beach organized the Girls Auxiliary in 1919 with fourteen members. When the Woman's Missionary Societies of the Union Association met at Meadow Branch Church in September 1919, all of these organizations reported progress. From 1909 to 1919 the following women served as president of the Meadow Branch Woman's Missionary Society: Mrs. B. Y. Tyner, Miss Janie Bivens, Mrs. S. N. Watson, Mrs. J. G. Carroll (for nine years), and Mrs. W. B. Williams.

At the time of the resignation of Mr. Black, May 10, 1919, C. C. Burris preached the sermon at Meadow Branch. The congregation passed resolutions praising Pastor Black and his work. These resolutions were placed in the church records and sent to the *Biblical Recorder* for publication. The Reverend A. C. Sherwood was called unanimously as pastor July 12, 1919. He was to serve jointly the pastorates of Marshville and Meadow Branch, as Pastor Black had done before him. Meadow Branch was to pay \$1,000 a year and furnish housing. That year the congregation began to revise its roll. It is this roll that appears at the end of this chapter. A committee of women was appointed to collect the pastor's salary; and the *Popular Hymnal* was chosen as the church hymn book. As was customary, Meadow Branch appointed messengers to the Union Association.

The year of 1920 was memorable in that a committee was appointed in January to "draft plans, select a location etc." for a new house of worship.¹⁹ The men named for that task were J. H. Williams, John A. Bivens, C. M. Beach, J. M. Lowery, and W. D. Bivens, with W. M. Perry and J. C. McIntyre added later. On April 10 the building committee unanimously reported that they had chosen the Jones' lots at a price of \$2,250. Moving quickly, they had also obtained an option on brick at \$18.50 per thousand. The report was accepted by a vote of seventy-eight in favor and two against. On May 23, 1920, application was made to the Home Mission Board for funds to help build the new church. The church had also begun evening services that year.

For almost a year the church minutes included very little of real importance. Then in August 1921, the congregation empowered the trustees to borrow \$1,000 for work on the new church. The Reverend Sherwood tendered his resignation, and it was accepted to become effective December 21. Cecil Perry was ordained into the ministry by

the Meadow Branch Church in November. That same month the trustees were authorized to dispose of the old church property, and the pulpit committee was instructed to seek a full-time pastor. Plans were made to canvas the members to decide what the salary should be, and the committee was instructed to apply to the State Convention for aid on the pastor's salary. The Reverend J. E. Hoyle was called as full-time pastor December 11, 1921, to be paid a salary of \$2,500 with a parsonage furnished. John A. Bivens, J. J. Perry, and J. B. Bass were appointed to arrange for the Reverend Hoyle's home.

CHURCH ROLL 1897-1921

This is a cumulative roll. By 1921 some of these members had died, transferred their letters, or been excluded. Only male members were listed in the minutes.

MALE MEMBERS

J. L. Austin	R. F. Honeycutt	Chesley Gaddy
B. D. Austin	Bradas Honey	Lee J. Smith
Palmer Austin	Cleg Honey	William Snyder
Joseph D. Austin	W. H. Herrin	Aaron Smith
John Adams	Sim Hargett	Charley Smith
Bert Austin	Parks Helms	Henry M. Sheron
Jule Adams	Graham Helms	R. L. Smith
W. T. Austin	W. H. Haywood	Clark Sears
Roy (?Ray) Austin	Bruce Helms	Ray Summerlin
Clyde Baucom	Hugh E. Helms	John Summerlin
Ray (?Roy) Bass	Chatam Helms	Hoyle Stewart
C. M. Beach	Mack Helms	J. H. Sindes (?)
Joseph Beach	Jay Helms	Rev. Archis (?Archer) Sherwood
R. S. Braswell	Boyce Helms	A. Clarence Sherwood
W. L. Biggers	J. B. Helms	James Sherwood
R. C. Bivens	Myres (Myers) Helms	J. B. Stegall
Jeff Bivens	Cyrus Helms	J. H. Thomas
John Bivens, Jr.	Glenn Helms	J. B. Tomberlin
Corum Bivens	M. S. Humphrey	Cleveland Thomas
N. W. Bivens	R. M. Hagler	D. C. Trull
Thomas Bivens	S. (?J.) B. Hagler	Charlie Trull

J. K. Bivens
 J. W. Bivens
 C. W. Baucom
 J. B. Bass
 Curtis Bivens
 Ruck Belk
 Clyde Bivens
 Rev. C. J. Black
 Charles S. Black
 Legrand Bennit
 J. B. Bass, Jr.
 Hoyle Bird
 Jo Bivens
 Keller Bennett
 Marshall Bennett
 T. L. Brewer
 Charley Brown
 J. Conley Baucom
 W. D. Bivens
 Lawrence Baucom
 James Black
 Alexis Chaney
 Roy Connell
 Boyce Collins
 W. A. Chaney
 J. P. Curlee
 W. A. Caudle
 Thomas Caudle
 Carl Caudle
 Stanley Cole
 Rev. W. G. Cathey
 T. Lloyd Collie
 Robert Duncan
 E. P. Eudy
 A. E. Eudy
 Therien Eudy
 Jacky Eudy
 Ethan Eudy
 H. (?D.) A. Eudy

Rev. J. C. Hoyle
 Rev. J. C. Jones
 Zeb Jones
 D. P. Jones
 J. Clyde Jones
 W. H. James
 James Liles
 Royal Liles
 Brooks Liles
 Ellis Liles
 C. C. Lamb
 J. M. Lowery
 Edwin Lowery
 M. F. Moore
 Ben Moore
 Claud (?Clyde) Moore
 E. L. May
 Bayard May
 James Chaney
 Henry Cuthbertson
 Grover Carroll
 Lee Chaney
 R. H. Cox
 J. L. Connell
 Z. V. McIntyre
 Charley McIntyre
 Leamon McIntyre
 Jessee McIntyre
 John Miller
 Calvin Nash
 Lee Nash
 J. W. Outen
 J. B. Outen
 Frank Outen
 J. Wilson Outen
 T. J. Perry
 W. M. Perry
 P. E. Perry
 Walter Perry

Brady Trull
 J. W. Trull
 Roy Trull
 Jessie Tarlton
 Bright Tucker
 Joel (?Jack) Trull
 Rev. Y. F. Shehane
 A. C. Small
 W. E. Smith
 Floyd Smith
 T. E. Williams
 T. J. Williams
 E. H. Williams
 J. H. Williams
 W. E. L. Williams
 W. B. Williams
 Rufus Williams
 Craven Williams
 J. S. Williams
 T. H. (?A.) Williams
 S. A. Williams
 H. T. Williams
 Wilton Williams
 Howard Morgan
 H. P. Meigs
 Clayton Meigs
 E. C. Meigs
 J. C. McIntyre
 R. A. McIntyre
 Blanchard Williams
 Carl Williams
 John Williams
 Voil Williams
 Ray Williams
 James K. Williams
 J. Clifton Williams
 William B. Williams
 J. Howard Williams
 C. Hovis Williams

Thomas Evans
 Arthur Evans
 Albert Evans
 Willie Free
 Clayton Jenkins
 E. W. Griffin
 J. Q. Griffin
 M. W. Griffin
 H. C. Griffin
 J. V. Griffin
 Ebb Griffin
 Clegg Griffin
 H. W. Griffin
 J. B. Griffin
 Boyce L. Griffin
 Frank Griffin
 Tom Griffin
 Edgar Griffin
 Boyce H. Griffin
 J. K. Griffin
 W. P. Griffin
 R. Cull Griffin
 J. Preston Griffin
 Rufus Griffin
 Bryce Griffin
 Needham Griffin
 Loyd Griffin
 Hazel Greene
 J. F. Gaddy
 William W. Gatbings
 J. C. Hamilton
 W. T. Hamilton

Jesse Perry
 Judson Perry
 Cecil Perry
 Gaddy Perry
 C. E. Perry
 Dee Perry
 Voiger Perry
 Mark Perry
 Sam Perry
 Zeb Perry
 D. H. Perry
 L. J. Perry
 Sam Perry
 John H. Perry
 Carles Preslar
 Clarence M. Perry
 Deusey A. J. Price
 J. B. Pierce
 D. Price
 P. A. Parker
 Vance Reid
 Lester Robinson
 Charlie Robinson
 Ernest Robinson
 John Robinson, Jr.
 Estel Robinson
 Sam Rape
 H. A. Redfearn
 Pease Griffin
 Bunyan (?Bronyan) Griffin
 Samuel Gaddy
 Robert A. Gaddy
 John Gaddy

Lem Watson
 J. A. Watson
 R. P. Witmore
 Lee Witmore
 Jesse Witmore
 Joe Witmore
 R. L. Womble
 Glenn Womble
 Rev. J. W. Rowell
 Hotchis (?Hatches) Rowell
 Grady Rowell
 Troy Rowell
 James B. Braswell
 Douglas D. Bivens
 John Waller Bivens
 Carlton Bivens
 Baxter Bivens
 G. J. Ross
 J. Wilson Ross
 Robert Ross
 Billy Stewart
 W. J. Stewart
 G. M. Stewart
 Arlie Smith
 W. V. Williams
 Ed. Williams
 Fred Williams
 R. E. Williams
 Bard Williams
 Jabez Williams
 Joseph Williams

CHAPTER FIVE

1920-1940

The Best of Times — The Worst of Times

Educational institutions are not made of brick and mortar and money. They are never great until sanctified by sacrifice.

Anonymous

The decade of the twenties opened with a spirit of confidence and anticipation in the Meadow Branch Church. A new building was in progress; World War I was behind; and there was hope for world peace through the League of Nations. Membership was in the four hundreds; a graded Sunday School numbered over three hundred; and the Woman's Missionary society was meeting regularly and contributing to all mission causes. The church's financial condition was somewhat unstable, but enough faith and belief was evident to undertake new responsibilities. Although the South was not experiencing the wartime boom of the Northeast, there was no premonition of the extent of the impending depression.

On homecoming Sunday, June 11, 1922, the congregation celebrated the completion of a new house of worship and a new parsonage. At that time "four hundred and thirty-one Sunday School students met and were assigned to their respective handsome and commodious class rooms." This was the first time they had met in the new church, having

used for several months the Wingate School building. Mr. Vann Williams, the church clerk, called a roll of nearly 450 current members of the church, and most of those answered to their names.¹ Attention was called to the beautiful stained glass windows, particularly to the one in memory of the late M. W. Griffin, and a moving tribute to him, written by J. W. Bivens, was read by Professor Clyde Jones. Five weeks before, on May 7, J. B. Outen had "tendered" the new nine-room parsonage to the church, and this had been accepted by John A. Bivens. At this homecoming, C. M. Beach presented the new church building, only partially furnished, to the congregation. It was accepted by C. C. Burris.² The first service in the new house of worship had been the twenty-sixth annual graduation exercises of the Wingate School, when Dr. C. E. Maddrey, secretary of the State Mission Board, had preached the sermon. On May 13, 1922, the Reverend J. E. Hoyle had assumed his duties as pastor at a salary of \$2,500 with a continuation of the previous agreement with Marshville Baptist Church to a joint pastorate, each church having services twice monthly. It should be noted that the State Mission Board contributed \$1,000 to assist in paying for the new building.³ Work was indeed going forward. The pastor was authorized to pay a professional singer \$50 for the week of protracted meetings the approaching August when services were planned for 10:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. The happy announcement was made that the goal of raising \$7,000 for the church debt had been passed by \$500, with a total of \$7,500 contributed. J. C. McIntyre, G. M. Stewart, W. M. Perry, and C. M. Beach were elected delegates to the state convention. At the same meeting it was voted to have a Christmas pageant and a Christmas tree in the church. Song books were purchased, and a well-organized Sunday School from cradle roll up, was in full operation. Two pianos were purchased in January 1922, one for the sanctuary and one for the Sunday School. The ladies of the church bought draping for the choir railing and the two doors at the back of the choir. W. B. Williams furnished ballast and sand to help in refinishing the basement, the work on which continued for two years. The columns at the front of the church were still to be added.

Meadow Branch was not so occupied with its local affairs as to forget its wider concerns. At the request of the governor of North Carolina, February 10, 1924, was set aside for a memorial service for the late President Woodrow Wilson. In 1925 members contributed to a Jewish relief fund. Ex-governor Cameron Morrison gave the annual Wingate

College commencement sermon that year in the church sanctuary.

But times were becoming more difficult everywhere. In February 1924, C. E. Maddrey, secretary of the State Mission Board, proposed that the church be relieved of its pledge to the Southern Baptist \$75 million campaign for missions to the extent that the church deemed reasonable, because of the failure of the Home Mission Board to furnish the promised aid on the church building program. The board of deacons suggested the sum of \$2,500 be deducted from the mission pledge. This was the amount which had been paid the previous year. The proposal was unanimously accepted by the church.⁴

At this point a two-year period of confusion and unrest occurred. The Reverend J. E. Hoyle resigned in June 1924. His resignation was at first accepted, then later rescinded. Two pastors who were called, declined. Mr. Hoyle preached under these conditions until November 1925, at which time the Reverend M. D. L. Preslar was engaged to supply two Sundays a month. The church recommended that Mary Ellen Wiley and Mildred Braswell seek aid to prepare for mission work. A whole new choir was elected. (It apparently was customary to do this each year.) The church, always concerned with the Wingate School, voted to drill a well to serve both the church and the school. However, many things were not going right. There was a decrease of forty-one members in 1924-25, and no one had yet been found to accept the pastorate. Nevertheless, in that year the church gave \$1,624.55 to the Cooperative Program; trees were planted in the church yard; and a wall was built on the church property. Mrs. Lee Chaney was appointed to the pulpit committee in September 1925. (As far as can be ascertained, she was the first woman to serve in that capacity.)

The Reverend Coy Muckle of Arkansas was called in January 1926. He accepted and preached his first sermon in June. The long period of uncertainty gave way to a wave of hope and optimism. A budget of \$3,000 was accepted in February, of which 60 percent was designated for church expenses and 40 percent to benevolences. In August Mr. Muckle preached at the protracted meeting, and there were twenty-five additions by baptism and five by letter. The church debt was lowered from \$3,900 to \$2,565. A committee, composed entirely of women, was appointed to solicit subscriptions to the *Biblical Recorder*. L. P. Beck was ordained into the ministry by the congregation on Sunday, November 7, 1926. Contrary to previous custom, the pastor conferred with two men who were at odds and reported to the church conference in Novem-

ber that the matter had been settled. Delegates to the state convention were appointed, and the senior department of the Sunday School was formed, thus completing the organization of a standard Sunday School. In the same month the duplex envelope system was agreed upon, each member making his pledge.⁵

During 1927, twenty-five dollars was given to support summer workers in the Union Association; Bessie Gaddy became the first woman treasurer of the church; and the *Modern Hymnal* was purchased. A welcome service for the Wingate students was held the first week of the school term, and the protracted meeting, again conducted by Mr. Muckle, added twenty-three members by baptism. The Reverend N. S. Joyner was ordained into the ministry. The columns at the front of the church were finally paid for in this year, and for the first time deacon committees were appointed: missions, pastor's salary, janitor and buildings, and yards and improvements. The year ended with a member requesting dismissal for "contempt of the church."⁶ It was granted.

The year 1928 passed with no spectacular event. The pastor's salary was raised to \$2,000; the church roll was revised; and a delinquent list was made. The board of deacons recommended to the Wingate board of aldermen that the law concerning the closing of businesses on Sunday should be enforced. The church decided that any offense of any outstanding nature which would bring the church under censure should automatically be brought before the church for discipline. For instance, the license of an ordained minister was revoked because of "loose financial dealing."⁷

On May 11, 1929, the entire board of deacons resigned. The designation of "deacon emeritus for life" was given to four members: W. M. Perry, J. H. Williams, T. E. Williams, and E. W. Griffin, all past seventy years of age. The mass resignation of all board members was not because of some dispute, but was a reorganization of the board itself. Prior to this time, a deacon was elected for life; also any man who had served another church as a deacon, upon joining Meadow Branch had, at his request, been accepted as one of its deacons. The board of deacons had definitely become an unwieldy body. Provisions were made for the church membership to be balloted for the election of a new seven-member board. The four men who received the highest number of votes would serve a four-year term, and the next three a two-year term. Elected for four years were: W. O. Kelly, W. A. Williams, R. L. Smith, and J. A. Bivens; and for two years: J. B. Huff, J. C. McIntyre, and

W. P. Bivens.⁸ The majority of these men had served on the previous board.

Matters in general were not good. The 1920s had not been particularly prosperous for this farming community, but by the fall of 1929 things were extremely bad for Meadow Branch. The church was three years behind in paying for its insurance; a man was excluded for not paying his "just and honest debts"; and "church collectors" were appointed to try to improve its financial condition. The financial situation at Wingate Junior College had also worsened. President J. B. Huff resigned, and in May 1930 the college's board of trustees unanimously elected the Reverend Coy Muckle as president. This meant that again Meadow Branch must find a pastor. The Reverend W. O. Johnson was called in November at a salary of \$1,500 and housing. By this time the depression had hit hard. A bank note was due, and a committee was appointed to bring delinquents before it for discipline, one aspect of which was now the payment of debts. As over the whole country, a dismal cloud was descending on Meadow Branch, but the business of the church and the saving of souls was never neglected. In 1931 a list was made of members not attending for the purpose of reenlisting them. One member was dismissed for non-attendance and misbehavior. As was the custom, the annual protracted meeting was held beginning the second Sunday in August.

A committee was appointed August 8, 1931, to contemplate changing the name of Meadow Branch Church. Those serving the church as deacons and trustees composed the committee, which reported in a special conference called for September 20, 1931, to consider this change.⁹ John H. Williams made the motion that the name be changed to Wingate Baptist Church. The following is an excerpt of an article by Mrs. John A. Bivens which appeared in the *Monroe Enquirer* September 22, 1931:

At a called conference on Sunday the members of Meadow Branch church voted to change the name of the church to Wingate Baptist church. There was very little opposition to the changing of the name, and the vote was made unanimous.

Meadow Branch church organized in 1810 and is the oldest church in the Union Baptist Association.

.....
This church has grown to be one of the largest in Union County with a membership of more than five hundred. The church building is a modern, commodious, brick structure with about thirty Sunday school rooms in addition to the main auditorium and Sunday school annex. The church is progressing nicely under the leadership of Rev. Mr. Johnson, and we are expecting no outstanding difference to be known as the church progresses under the name of Wingate Baptist Church.
.....

The name of Meadow Branch church will always be near to the hearts of a host of people who have been members of this church during their entire lifetime but it seemed the practical thing to do to change the name of the church. . . .

Great changes were also taking place in the Wingate School. The report to the association in 1920 indicated that all grades below the seventh had been discontinued, and that the seventh would be cut "as soon as the public school situation improved so as to make it practical." Certainly one of the great forces in establishing the Wingate School in 1896 had been the lack of educational opportunities in the area. Now the public schools were competing for the lower grades with a free education, and Wingate had to meet this challenge. As the lower grades were discontinued, the music department and the high school thrived. There were 163 music students in 1920, making it necessary to employ three new music teachers and buy three new pianos. The fee for board and room that year was \$9.65 a month, for tuition \$34.00 a year, and music \$24.00 a year. The demand for rooms for boys had doubled. The dormitory was full with a waiting list. On the negative side: there was no science laboratory equipment; the library was woefully inadequate; and there was a great need for dormitory space for girls.¹⁰

Because of the competition with the public schools in 1921, there were only thirty local students, down from sixty the previous year. The reason was simple: The public school at Wingate in that year added the eleventh grade free to all who came. So Wingate did what was necessary for it to do in order to survive. The trustees and principal of the school recommended that the first year of college courses be offered as soon as possible. The association concurred,¹¹ and this was accomplished in 1923. A new era was opening. During the first twenty-eight years, classes from the first grade through high school were taught. Lower

grades had gradually been abolished as the free public school in the town grew. During this period M. B. Dry, B. Y. Tyner, J. G. Carroll, Miss Pattie Marks, and C. M. Beach had served as heads of the school.

When the fall session opened August 22, 1924, there was a new president and a new name, Wingate Junior College. Two years of college work was offered by an eleven-member faculty to 213 students. Two years of high school work were still offered; a new chemistry laboratory had been installed at a cost of \$2,000; the library had been greatly improved; and all the buildings had been painted and wired for electricity. The value of the plant was estimated then to be \$150,000.¹² The Baptist State Convention had taken over the school in 1923 and promised to help with its indebtedness, which unfortunately had become very burdensome. Of the \$5,000 annually the State Convention had promised to pay to enable the school to be placed on the accredited list of Standard Junior Colleges, only \$3,000 per year was actually paid over the next few years. Boyce L. Biggers, in the report to the Union Association in 1929 asked that the association assume the extra \$2,000 annually and that a committee be appointed to apportion the cost among the churches.¹³ The report was adopted, and Meadow Branch's apportionment was \$750, equaled only by Monroe's. The next highest share assigned any other church was \$100, but things became increasingly difficult. After having served Wingate Junior College since 1923, President Huff resigned May 7, 1930. Twenty days later the Reverend Coy Muckle was asked by the trustees to assume the presidency. This he did immediately.

There was much speculation as to whether the school would open that fall. Teachers had not been paid; a huge debt hung so heavily as to seem insurmountable. There seemed to be little to keep the institution going except the firm belief on the part of a great many people, its alumni, friends and teachers, and especially Coy Muckle and C. C. Burris, who was then its academic dean, that God had a place for Wingate College and that with the faith and hard work of these committed to it, the institution would not fail. It has been this same feeling that has steered Wingate through many difficult times and, God willing, will keep it safe and secure in the future. As Wingate's only "historian" has written:

The courage, faith and sacrifices made by the faculty and employees during these several years constitute one of the brightest chapters in the history of the school.¹⁴

It did more than that — it saved the school.

In November 1930 the Baptist State Convention because of financial difficulties gave the ownership of Wingate College to the Baptist churches of the Union, Pee Dee, Mecklenburg, and Cabarrus Associations. To the dismay of everyone concerned, in the spring of 1932, just the day after the traditional "Arbor Day" celebration, the administrative building burned to the ground. But that is another story. In 1939 the Baptist State Convention passed a resolution to reestablish financial support for Wingate College. The council on education and the general board of the convention recommended in 1946 that Wingate share in the allocation of funds for education on the same basis as the other Baptist colleges of the state. With this decision a new era opened in the history of Wingate College. It was again a member of the family of Baptist colleges of North Carolina and has remained so since.

During these two decades (1920-1940), the Woman's Missionary Society held meetings each month. Very meticulous records were kept with the names of the members enrolled, those present at each meeting, and the amounts of contributions. Six presidents served during this time: Mrs. F. O. Richardson, Mrs. M. D. L. Preslar, Mrs. J. E. Hoyle, Mrs. L. C. Polk, Mrs. E. C. Kolb, and Mrs. John A. Bivens. The five circles were named: the Margaret Griffin, the Jennie Tucker, the Bessie Beach, the Rock Rest, and the Valoria Rankin (later changed to the Mary Ellen Dozier). Each circle took its turn in having charge of the programs at the general meetings of the Woman's Missionary Society. These programs evidenced the worldwide scope of their concerns. In the four-year period 1921-1924, the society gave a total of \$1,976.56 to the \$75 million campaign. One year ten items were listed to which the society contributed.

There was faithful observance of the convention-wide week of prayer for missions along with the special offerings upon which the boards of foreign and home missions of the Southern Baptist Convention depended for about half their support. The society also sponsored the Sunbeams, Girls' Auxiliary, and Young Woman's Auxiliary through which the rising generation would learn about the strong Baptist mission effort and be encouraged to make their commitment to it. They did not neglect to pray and visit the sick and suffering around them; they helped the indigent of the community and attended all the associational and district meetings of their organization. Their membership increased as did their work and influence in the Meadow Branch-Wingate Baptist Church.

Meanwhile, 1931 was a very difficult year at Wingate Baptist Church. The pastor had been promised only \$1,500, but even part of that was impossible to collect. Gifts to the Cooperative Program fell from \$2,000.00 in 1929 to \$302.20 in 1931. (Twenty-four churches in the Union Association were unable to pay anything.) Nevertheless, the other work of the church was going well. There were 520 members, an attendance of 474 in the Sunday School, and very active Baptist Young People's Union and Woman's Missionary Union organizations. The church paid \$15 that year for a history of the Meadow Branch Church written by W. O. Johnson, the pastor, to be printed in the minutes of the Union Association.

The sad financial story was almost repeated in 1932. A loan of \$300 was still outstanding, and members were solicited in an attempt to pay it. At every church conference, reports were made by the church treasurer, BYPU director, and the WMU. It was a year of survival. Records of 1933 revealed that the pastor asked "consideration in paying his salary,"¹⁵ even to payment in produce. Money was borrowed from the Bank of Wingate to pay some part of this obligation. In July the note was still outstanding, and in November the amount to be paid was apportioned among the members, and a committee was charged to collect it. W. H. James painted the church, donating his labor, and a special offering was made to "go as far as possible" in paying obligations of the church. After the college lost its administrative building by fire in the fall of 1932, arrangements were made for classes in the spring term to be held in the church building, for which reason in January 1933 the college assumed the responsibility for janitorial service at the church and one-half of its power bill. A note for \$600 was overdue in April, and in May 1933 when the radiators at the church needed repair, the church members managed to pay this bill by each family selling chickens. The indebtedness of the church was discussed in July, and an every-member canvas was held with each apportioned an amount according to his ability to pay. The story goes that the college teachers donated coal to the church twice in 1933. How they did this cannot be explained because they themselves were not being paid! But the revival was held as usual, beginning the second Sunday in August. Members were asked to have the pastor and visiting minister in their homes for meals. Mr. E. N. Johnson, the visiting minister, was paid \$43.

No financial improvement was evident the next year and even the weather seemed not to cooperate, for no services were held on February

10, 1934, because of extremely bad conditions. The Lord's Supper was observed only twice that year. The pastor's salary was sadly in arrears, and the people were asked to supply provisions if possible. For the first time in the church's long history, minutes were not kept or else possibly they were mislaid. The continuity in the records was broken for the greater part of 1935 and a portion of 1936. The congregation held conference in February 1935 to make plans for ordination of Ernest Smith, a student at Wingate College. The generally dismal picture persisted as the immediate need of \$1,500 was stressed that month, and a canvas of the membership was made in the effort to raise it. Mr. Johnson resigned effective in June 1935, and the Reverend J. A. Snow, who was a Bible teacher at the college, became the interim pastor. By September the church tried to set its affairs in order. It set up a budget for October through December as follows: for Cooperative Program \$75; janitor, \$30; pastor's salary, \$150 (\$50 a month). The outlook was still bleak.

The 1936 letter to the Union Association reported ten additions by baptism and six by letter at Wingate Baptist Church, but a loss of thirty-eight, mostly by letter. Only \$644.67 had been paid that year to the pastor; \$21.00 was contributed to the Cooperative Program, and \$1,521.00 to other benevolent causes, but a total of \$2,295.35 had been applied on the principal and interest of the church debt. Wingate Church was struggling to survive. A custom, first established when Meadow Branch Church was constituted in 1810 was broken May 10, 1936. No longer would they hold a Saturday preaching and conference session on the "Saturday before the second Sunday." Instead, on the second Sunday of each month, the conference would be held following the morning service. It was explicitly stated that the minutes were to be kept and read at each such meeting. The congregation also ordered that the Lord's Supper be observed the first Sunday of each quarter. Four new deacons and several ushers were elected. Wingate Church was trying hard to fulfill its mission in a difficult time. October 11, 1936, the church gave Wingate Junior College a gift of \$1,217.94. This was an interesting matter of bookkeeping. Pledges of Wingate faculty to the church were given to the college, and that amount would be subtracted from the salaries of the teachers involved. No money changed hands!

During November 1936 an "in-gathering" was held — anything was brought to be sold at auction, and a supper was served. That project, together with another supper that same month, netted \$263.55, which

was applied against the indebtedness of the church. The price for each supper plate was fifty cents! The Sunday School collection each first Sunday was designated for the Baptist orphanage. All "table" collections were to be applied on the indebtedness. Obviously to be in debt in the depression era was very serious business. A report in December showed the church still owing \$5,092, mostly to the Jefferson Standard Insurance Company. Applying all collections and \$500 from the State Mission Board, this figure was reduced to \$3,900, all past due. Because of the high interest rate paid, \$3,500 was borrowed at the State Bank of Wingate, and the Jefferson Standard note was paid off in February 1937. Early in the thirties the church had borrowed \$3,500 (in two notes of \$1,750 each) from Jefferson Standard Insurance Company. These notes had been secured by life insurance on the lives of some of the deacons of \$1,000 each. When Mr. J. Preston Griffin died in 1935, \$1,000 was paid on the church debt by the insurance company.

The Reverend J. A. Snow resigned in March 1937, and the board of deacons and the trustees were asked to search for a new pastor. Meanwhile, various local ministers filled the pulpit until the Reverend E. C. Kolb of Cheraw was called as pastor August 29, 1937. A unanimous vote was requested, but one woman voted against the call. The Reverend Walter Jones of Charlotte held the protracted meeting in October (a little late this year). The meeting resulted in twenty additions by baptism and thirteen by letter. In 1937 the total amount paid up until September 26 for the pastor's salary was \$515.33, according to the minutes of that date.

Despite the church's efforts, promissory notes popped up everywhere. One for \$400 was made in December 1937 at the Waxhaw Bank. Every farmer was asked to set aside "God's Acre," the proceeds from which would go to the church. The note at the Wingate Bank was renewed February 6, 1938. In July 1938, \$200 was borrowed to pay on the pastor's salary, then \$500 in arrears, and the deacons assumed personal responsibility to repay it. The church debt still amounted to \$2,550. But more cheerfully, the letter to the association indicated that 102 persons were added to the church and there was a fully standard Sunday School. The men of the church met on December 11 to discuss plans for tithing and how the \$500 in back salary could be paid to the pastor.

On February 26, 1939, the parsonage was destroyed by fire. Much of the pastor's furniture and personal belongings, including his books, were lost. Housing, but without running water, was secured for \$20 per

month. Plans were made to remedy this, but in April still no water was available in the pastor's home, and his back salary remained unpaid. The congregation voted to apply the \$1,500 insurance from the parsonage fire to the church debt. That, with another \$1,500 from the State Mission Board and a promise of \$750 more at the "closing of the debt," made it possible to pay off the debt on the church building.

A committee from the Wingate Church reported that the church at Pleasant View, which they were assisting, was to be constituted May 14, 1939. Mr. Kolb resigned July 9, 1939, and his resignation was accepted. The Reverend N. C. Coggins, who lived in the community, was engaged as a supply pastor at the salary of \$60 per month. On the fourth Sundays, ministerial students were used for the evening services. The happy report was made December 8, 1940, that the church debt had finally been paid. There was much rejoicing, and a day of dedication was set. Another milestone had been reached!



**Meadow Branch Church
1883-1922**



Meadow Branch Singing School about 1897-98 conducted by a Mr. Bland who brought his little sons with him each day. These names were given by Mrs. Mary May Lowery in 1972. She was one of those who attended.

In front is Bright Griffin with his son, Boyce. Mr. Bland, the teacher is sitting in the chair.

On first row are: 1st-unknown, Reece Bivens, Jim Bivens, Joe Austin, Homer Benton, Ehh Griffin (Cousin Moke's son), Mattie Gaddy Douglas, Irene Lowery Cox, Elie Mullis Chaney, Mitt Williams Mangum, Ora Williams Webster, Emily Boyd, Clara Nicholson, two Bland boys, Daisy Brooks Brewer Thomas, Mary Williams, Blanche Mangum (Frank Mangum's daughter), Matt Griffin (Uncle Enoch's youngest daughter), Mrs. Anna Williams Bivens.

2nd row: Ellen Marsh Bivens, Essie Barrino Price, Lee Caudle, Wilma Perry, Inez Caudle Lilly, Vergie Stewart, Bertha Boyd, Nora Williams, Mary Liles Lee, Lillie Outen Brooks, Mattie Perry Allen, Ida Austin, Estelle Bivens Helms, Annie May, Wilma Hamilton, Mary Lee Bivens Tyner, Mary May Lowery, Kate Liles Griffin, Lessie Austin, Annie Griffin, Nep Barrino, Lanie Lowery, Lydia Meiggs Austin, Sallie Perry Belk, Blanche Perry, Lou Williams Sanders, Vergie Bennett Griffin.

3rd row: Fred Williams, Nathaniel Bivens, (unknown), John Outen, Covie Boyd, Bunn Griffin, Tom Griffin, Hamp Liles, Edgar Williams, Rufus Williams, Minnie Perry, Kate Mangum (Frank's daughter), Miles Bivens, Ira Mullis.

Last row at the top: Enoch Griffin, John Austin, Roland Williams, Gilmer Clontz, Lonnie Hurley, (unknown), Joe Austin (Mett's boy), Ed Hurley, Ada Williams Gathings, Mattie Griffin Gaddy, Faire Bivens Secrest, Harrell, Blanche Williams Broadway, Vergie Stewart, (unknown), Grace Austin.

Front of the church was to the right of the picture — Taken on the East side of the church.



Original Building of Wingate School



Coronation Ceremony



Edmund Lilly Davis
1856-1896



C. J. Black
1914-1919



Coy Muckle
1926-1930



William C. Link, Jr.
1941-1945



David K. Shelton
1946-1949



Walter E. Sanders
1949-1953



J. Dewey Hobbs, Jr.
1954-1964



L. Eugene Walter
1965-1972



Everett Chapman
1973-1978



Roy N. Ford, Jr.
1979-

CHAPTER SIX

1940-1960

A World at War — A Church on the Move

*It is the fate of this generation . . .
to live with a struggle we did not start,
in a world we did not make.*

John F. Kennedy

The decade of the forties opened auspiciously for Wingate Baptist Church. The building was free of debt for the first time since the dream of a modern brick building had inspired the congregation, and so a great celebration was planned. The report of the treasurer, Mrs. Benson Bivens (Corinna Chaney), showed a balance of \$60.03. Miss Mildred Griffin served as church clerk, and her minutes were faithfully taken at each meeting and beautifully maintained.

The dedication service was impressive. Mrs. L. W. Chaney, John A. Bivens, and Mrs. M. A. Griffin served as the planning committee. The Reverend William Harrison Williams of Charlotte, a lifelong friend of the church and school, preached the dedicatory sermon to a large appreciative audience.

All was not well, however, with our world. According to Dr. Robert Ferguson, A Wingate College history professor: Southern Baptists moved “from a . . . naive advocacy of international cooperation . . . to a more militant . . . stance . . . they began to see totalitarianism as a foe

of Christianity.”¹ Not only was this true of Southern Baptists in general but also of the local churches. Wingate Baptist especially was made acutely aware of the impending threat when the first peace-time draft occurred September 14, 1940. The surrounding area served as the location for maneuvers, and the Red and Blue armies fought throughout this section for months, albeit with wooden guns and fake tanks. President Roosevelt solemnly promised that “our boys” would not be sent overseas, but ominous sounds from Europe made everyone fearful.

The Reverend Coggins informed the church in January 1941 of his plans to leave to accept a pastorate in Virginia. A resolution was passed February 14, 1941, thanking him for his seventeen months of service as supply pastor, and at the same time a special collection was taken to help him move. He had served the church well and lovingly in a very difficult time.² The church extended a call the next month to the Reverend W. C. Link, Jr., a recent graduate of the Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville. Mr. Link was a personable, enthusiastic young man and seemed to be just the person that Wingate Baptist Church needed as pastor at this time.

“Bill” Link, as he came to be affectionately called by both young and old, began his ministry in this church at a salary of \$100 a month. Mr. Link married Virginia Deal of Charlotte, a graduate of the WMU Training School in Louisville, shortly after he came to Wingate. The church bought the D. H. Perry house for \$1,800 in October 1941 to serve as a parsonage. In November the church passed a budget of nearly \$8,000 and raised the pastor’s salary to \$1,500 a year. More than half of the budget was designated for benevolent items. In February 1942 the church voted that 25 percent of the funds allocated to the Cooperative Program would be given to Wingate College.

After the attack on Pearl Harbor and our nation’s declaration of war on Japan and Germany in December 1941, the country quickly prepared itself for total war. Before the carnage was over, fifty-two young men from the church would be in the service of their country, and two of the finest, John Henry Cuthbertson and Harold Love, would die. Both young men had grown up in this church and had attended Wingate College. The war struck deeply. In many ways it seemed that the church held its breath during the next four years, scarcely knowing what to expect, fearing the worst, yet hoping for the best, marking time until the end should come.

Camp Sutton, an embarkation camp, was built only a few miles from Wingate, and the church appointed a Community Hospitality Committee to coordinate its relationship with the camp. Soldiers were welcomed at Wingate Baptist Church and in the homes of its members, and the pastor cooperated with the army chaplains in order that the church could serve those in the military most effectively. It was a critical time. A part-time secretary was paid "to help write letters to the boys in service," and the pastor was empowered to buy Bibles for those who did not have one.³

The church voted to revise the church roll, making two lists. One would contain the names of active members. The other, a roll of inactive members, would include the names of those who had not attended or contributed for the past two years. Exceptions would be made for health reasons, and no one would be put on the latter list without being given notification and sixty days to reply.⁴

Harry Gamble, a Waxhaw native and former Wingate student, was invited to preach in the revival held in August 1942. Five accepted the faith and requested baptism, and ten more members came forward on "Join the Church" day, September 26. John S. Staton was ordained by the Wingate Baptist Church on March 21, 1943. In that year also the budget was increased by more than \$600; the pastor's salary was raised to \$1,800; eighteen members were baptized August 22; and John A. Bivens was the superintendent of the Sunday School, which had an enrollment of 277. Mr. Link was given permission to serve Midway Church the afternoons of the first and third Sundays and have two days in each month for visitation of that congregation.⁵ Plans were made to redecorate the parsonage.

On June 6, 1944, the Allied forces invaded Normandy. Almost every family in the church had someone in that invasion whom they loved. Appropriately, the congregation gathered at the church at 6:30 p.m. for the following service:

INVASION DAY SERVICE

**Wingate Baptist Church
W. C. Link, Jr., Pastor
June 6, 1944, 6:30 P.M.**

Meditation Period	Soft Music
Hymn — "O God, Our Help"	39
Hymn — "O God, We Pray for all Mankind".....	267
Solo.....	Mrs. Johnson
Scripture Reading.....	Psalm 46
Prayer	
Message	
Prayer Period	
Hymn — "In the Cross of Christ I Glory"	113
Benediction	
Postlude	

Send this program to some boy in service that he may be conscious of the fact that we are praying for him.

There were other difficulties. It was announced in August 1944 that the revival could not be held the second Sunday of that month, a time of long-standing custom, because of the serious polio epidemic in the state. On November 14 the Reverend Link submitted his resignation, effective December 15. With great reluctance the church accepted it and bade the family, which by then included a baby son, a fond goodbye. A gift and resolutions of respect accompanied the farewells.

The Reverend David Shelton accepted a call to become pastor and assumed his duties January 15, 1945. He and his wife had a baby daughter about three months old. The deacons made several recommendations about church membership: that any letter of dismissal be voted on by the church; that all candidates for baptism first be instructed by the pastor; and that the revision of the church roll be completed. This roll, accurately reflecting the resident membership (reproduced at the end of this chapter), was the first official roll without separate listings for males and females.

Germany surrendered to the Allied forces May 7, 1945. As always in times of great emotion, stress, grief, and joy, the congregation gathered together with Wingate Methodists and other organizations to express their thanksgiving that at least part of the long ordeal was over.

W I N G A T E V - E S E R V I C E

Wingate Baptist Church

Wingate, N.C.

May 7, 1945

QUIET MUSIC

CALL TO WORSHIP Hymn No. 63

“Dear Lord and Father of Mankind”

RESPONSIVE READING, NO. 5 (Ps. 92)

“Good to Give Thanks”

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

EXPRESSIONS OF THANKSGIVING FOR VICTORY

IN EUROPE

1. Masonic Organizations Mr. Chatham Chaney
2. Town Officials Mr. Lawson McQuirter
3. High School Mrs. Burns Hinson
4. Woman's Clubs Mrs. Joe Chaney

SPECIAL MUSIC College Group

RESPONSIVE READING, NO. 19.. “Our Refuge and Strength”

EXPRESSIONS OF CONTRITION AND PRAYER

FOR VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC

1. Methodist Church Mr. Bingham
2. Baptist Church Mr. John Bivens
3. Wingate College Mr. C. C. Burris

PRAYER FOR VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC

HYMN “America” No. 302

BENEDICTION

Germany had surrendered, but many Wingate boys were still fighting in the Pacific.

Life at home went on. For some time, the congregation had discussed an organ for the sanctuary, and a committee had been appointed. In July 1945 they reported that a suitable organ could be bought for \$1,600. The congregation voted to collect the money before making the purchase but planned to have the organ in place by spring. At the same time, the finance committee reported that the expenditures of the

church were greater than its receipts. Efforts were made to increase the contributions. A note of apology from one member was read in August concerning trouble he had had with another member. The apology was duly accepted.

Japan surrendered August 15, 1945, after atomic bombs had been dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki earlier in the month. At last the horrible war was over. The service in the church was a moving event. J. E. Hogan spoke on behalf of those in the community who had served in some capacity during the war; Professor Fred Sandusky paid tribute to the forty-two returned veterans already in classes at Wingate College; and the Reverend Shelton made remarks of appreciation for the large number in the church who had already been discharged. An impressive candle-lighting ceremony was held honoring the memory of Harold Love and John Henry Cuthbertson. George Whitley and Eugene Myers, brothers-in-law of these young men and both discharged veterans, lighted the candles, which symbolized the light of their lives given in service to their country.

The church carried on its usual activities in announcing the appointment of twelve regular committees and three temporary ones. It voted to take \$500 from the budgeted funds for the Cooperative Program and give the money to Wingate College. The Reverend Sankey Blanton held a revival meeting in November. Floyd Helms was ordained into the ministry in December.

In 1946, the congregation voted to pay expenses for the pastor and one deacon to attend the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Miami, Florida. In June a collection was taken for world relief. Delegates to the state convention in Greensboro were instructed to vote their own convictions on the question of accepting the Reynolds Foundation money with the accompanying provision to relocate Wake Forest College in Winston-Salem.⁶ During the August meeting the following month, twenty persons joined the church by baptism and two by letter. Mr. Lee Chaney was made an honorary deacon for life, and the next month the church voted that anyone who turned seventy years old while serving as deacon would become an honorary deacon for life. Those so named were J. B. Gaddy, Lee Smith, and R. D. Smith.⁷

Mr. Boyd Horton was engaged as the associational missionary, and the church voted to assume monthly payments for a portion of his salary. The church trustees were authorized to convey to the Town of Wingate title to that portion of the cemetery on the west end needed for

a municipal water system. The town was to pay for moving the graves and all other expenses. L. P. Beck asked the church to join the community effort in building the Alumni Dormitory for the college.

In June 1947 Mr. and Mrs. R. F. Small of Monroe presented chimes to the church. A student worker, Miss Nadine Carson, was employed for May and June at \$100 a month. In September she was employed for a full year. A successful music training session was conducted by Professor Inman Johnson of Southern Baptist Seminary. The church was feeling a real need for Sunday School classrooms, so plans were begun for repairing the basement for that purpose. The budget in 1948 allotted 46 percent to local expenses and 54 percent to missions and other benevolences.

For a few years in this period the minutes were too general and vague to convey what was happening. Reports were given by the WMU, the Sunday School, the student worker, the treasurer, and some committees, but the record gave none of their contents. In 1948, the T. K. Helms class refinished their meeting room in the basement. An attempt to change the time of the August revival failed, although for that year it was postponed. The church voted to pave the street separating it from the college and the one behind the church at a cost of between \$325 and \$400. The church also accepted a \$6,000 quota for the enlargement campaign for Wingate and Wake Forest Colleges, designating all but \$500 of this for Wingate, and planned to accept a special offering late in the year to pay off the church debt.

Mr. Shelton resigned as pastor April 17, 1949, and asked to be released by May 1 because his acceptance as an army chaplain made him subject to call at any time. This was done. In May it was voted that the board of deacons, increased by then to eighteen members, be reduced to seven appointed members. However, the congregation rescinded this action the following month and later voted that seven members be elected for staggered terms: four for three years and three for two years.⁸

On August 28, 1949, Dr. Walter E. Sanders from Elizabethtown, Kentucky, preached at the morning service and afterwards was unanimously elected to assume the pastorate on the second Sunday in October. Dr. Sanders was a graduate of the Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, and his wife of the WMU Training School there. Wingate Baptist insisted, as had been its traditional practice, that its leaders be well-trained.

The revival in 1949 was led by the Reverend Raymond DeArmand of Chesterfield, South Carolina. Fifteen members were added by baptism and four by letter. The same month McGee Tractor and Equipment Company landscaped the backyard of the church as a gift.

Wingate College was making progress after struggling during the war years. Returning veterans enrolled and added excitement and new life to the school. Efird Memorial Library and the Alumni Dormitory for men were completed. The precise relationship of Wingate and the Baptist State Convention was under careful consideration. As early as 1943 an effort was made for Wingate to become again a full-fledged member of the State Convention, but M. A. Huggins, then general secretary of the convention, had given no encouragement. However, President C. C. Burris and a loyal corps of alumni, many of them influential pastors and businessmen throughout the state, continued to fight. It was a long struggle, but on November 2, 1949, the school charter was amended for the third time, so that the state convention again assumed ownership and control of the college.⁹ It had taken many years to accomplish this goal, but President Burris and the loyal friends of the college had won. Wingate became a full-fledged agency of the Baptist State Convention along with the other six North Carolina Baptist Colleges. Two other very significant events occurred before Mr. Burris resigned as president of Wingate in July of 1953. The college gained membership in the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, the leading accrediting agency in the south, and its faculty and staff became a part of the National Social Security program.¹⁰ Thus ended in 1953 an era in the life of Wingate College. It had been a time of perseverance, love, commitment, and sacrifice which laid a sound foundation for the present four-year accredited Wingate College.

The decade of the fifties opened at the church with the securing of a college student to assist the pastor in office work. The student received a \$100 scholarship to Wingate College in payment. The State Mission Board, which was paying part of the pastor's salary, reduced its contribution by \$750. The church voted to take that sum from the amount budgeted for the Cooperative Program and apply it to the pastor's salary. It was voted to send the old church records to Wake Forest for safekeeping.¹¹ True to her tradition, Wingate Baptist Church took a collection in February 1950 to help a needy member, and after Wingate College students established a mission in Wesley Chapel in 1951, the

church paid a student \$20 per month to serve as minister.

The decision was made in 1950 to combine the regular August meeting with the revival held at Wingate College. The heyday of the famous August meetings was rapidly coming to a close. In 1951 the meeting was postponed until the following April. Not until October 1954 did the church vote to resume the August time for the revival; even then a meeting was not held in 1955. The congregation agreed in January 1956 to have an August meeting, but none occurred that year. The feeling persisted that the traditional August meetings should be held, but they just could not be "fitted in!"

The subject of the manner of electing deacons again arose in September 1952 when it was voted that the congregation would nominate three men during a church conference; the names of those five receiving the highest number of votes would be placed on ballots from which members would then elect two. Tom Lowery and Bernard Helms were chosen that year.

As early as May 1951 it was evident to the church that the sanctuary needed renovation, that the basement needed to be remodeled, and that an educational building would soon be necessary. The congregation voted that members make a regular contribution the first Sunday of each month for these projects. By April 1952 a building committee was appointed. In July Baron Smith, as chairman of the committee, presented plans for remodeling the sanctuary at a cost of \$20,000. The church voted to proceed as soon as one-half of the required money was in hand. Services were being held in the college auditorium by September, so apparently the \$10,000 was raised promptly. The first service in the refurbished sanctuary was held on December 21, 1952. The work had cost a total of \$23,704.50, and an outstanding balance of \$10,289.88 remained. Mrs. Alice (W.M.) Perry loaned the church \$7,000, and the rest was collected in a special offering.

The church was still ordaining young men into the ministry. Leonard Hendricks was ordained February 24, 1951; F. O. Legrand, June 21, 1953; and Joe Larrimore, July 26, 1953. Bill Cochrane and Aaron Tyner were licensed to preach September 13, 1953.

Dr. Sanders resigned November 1953 to go to Marietta, Georgia. He was formally asked by the church to reconsider his decision, but on the next Sunday he reported that he felt the Lord's call to go, so the church reluctantly accepted his decision. A moving tribute, a copy of which was sent to the *Biblical Recorder*, was paid to Dr. and Mrs. Sanders before

they left. J. J. Cowsert, a retired missionary to Brazil living in Wingate, was asked to supply the pulpit until a minister could be called. The Reverend Dewey Hobbs, who was then serving Center Grove Church in Kershaw, South Carolina, came to visit and meet with the congregation December 15, 1953. He filled the pulpit December 27 and accepted the call to serve Wingate Baptist Church beginning January 31, 1954. A vote of thanks was given to Mr. J. J. Cowsert for his faithful service.

The Reverend Hobbs was given authority in May 1954 to seek an educational secretary and youth director for full-time employment at a salary of \$3,000 per year. Jane Russell (later Mrs. Allen Burris) held the position that summer for \$50 per month. The following summer Jack Parker, a Wingate student, served as a youth worker for \$40 per week. The church voted in September 1954 to give 30 percent of its budget to the Cooperative Program the following year, of which 5 percent was designated for Wingate College.

Excellent cooperation always existed between the Wingate Methodist and Baptist churches. On special occasions they held joint meetings, and in December 1954 Wingate Baptist Church received a letter of thanks for the help given the Methodists in building their educational plant. Some time later the Baptists provided the flowers when the Methodists first worshipped in their new sanctuary.

During this decade, in order that the entire congregation would be informed, it became customary to read the church's annual letter to be sent to the Union Association. A homecoming date was set for the second Sunday in August 1956, but no further mention appeared in the records. The method of the election of deacons seemed to change continually. In June 1956 the church voted to elect three deacons each year for three-year terms, enlarging the board to nine the following year.¹² C. R. Garrison, Harry Chaney, and Ralph Williams were elected under this system. It has remained virtually the same since that time, except for the enlargement of the board in 1976 when the church decided to elect five deacons each year. In November the deacons recommended that a committee be appointed to form a constitution and by-laws for the church. That year 1956 also saw the adoption of a retirement plan for the church's minister. A goal of \$1,000 was set for an offering to help build the college dining hall, and on November 24, the congregation invited the Wingate College students and faculty to their homes for noon dinner. Allen Burris was part-time recreation director in the summer of 1956 at a salary of \$30 per week. The deacons

appointed a committee to begin work on plans for an educational building. Those were George Glenn, Mrs. Dwight Griffin, R. C. Hargette, Mrs. Burns Hinson, J. E. Hogan, Walter Perry, and Earl Williams. This committee presented plans in May 1957 for the erection of the present building.

During the fifties a very active Brotherhood organization met regularly and shared church chores. The need for waterproofing and remodeling the basement was a prime concern in 1957. That year the \$3,500 allocation was spent, but the work was incomplete, and in February 1959, \$1,020 was set aside to pay the remaining repair bills.

In May 1957 plans were made to begin a Vacation Bible School. Wingate College was invited to use the sanctuary for its daily chapel programs while the school auditorium was converted to classrooms and offices to accommodate the growth of the student body. A new area of service was opened this year when funds were allotted for a summer recreational program, which Charles Ray Williams administered at a salary of \$65 per week. The time for church conference was set for Wednesday night after the first Sunday. All funds collected on Christian Education Day were designated for Wingate College, and the president, Dr. Budd E. Smith, thanked the church for the \$490 offering. Also the budget for the 1957-58 year included a \$600 gift to the college. The church decided to give a Bible to each member entering the armed forces. Increasing the church building fund was still an active concern, and October, November, and December were set aside to try to double that fund.

In the forties and fifties a large part of the minutes was taken up with accepting letters from students in the college and the subsequent granting of letters when they left Wingate. It was the custom to have a "Join the Church" day, and as many as thirty-two students on such an occasion would bring their letters or come under the church's "watch-care" while enrolled at the college. A very close relationship still existed at this time between the church and the college; students assisted in all phases of the work of the church and found a church home in Wingate Baptist Church. April 1958 was a busy month. A large church fellowship supper was held in the college dining hall; the church voted to join a state convention-wide simultaneous revival; Sunday May 4 was designated to reach a goal of \$10,000 in the building fund; and Sunday morning service was moved to 9:00 a.m. before the 10:00 a.m. Sunday School session. At the Reverend Dewey Hobbs' request, the church

permitted him to attend the six-weeks course at the School of Pastoral Care affiliated with Baptist Hospital in Winston-Salem; in 1984 he was to become the director of that School of Pastoral Care. The time of church conference was changed back to the second Sunday following the worship hour, and the pastor's salary raised to \$5,720. During this time the Brotherhood continued to be a strong organization in the church.

At the beginning of 1959 the church made plans for its sesquicentennial celebration. The date was set for October 2-5, 1960. The deacons appointed three large committees: entertainment (twenty people), program (eleven), and publicity (eight). In the meantime it was agreed that the organist be paid \$30 per month. (The choir director was not paid.) The Sunday morning worship was returned to 11:00 a.m.; the pastor was given three weeks vacation; and the architect for the educational plant was secured.

The year ended on a note of optimism. A large Christmas program was planned and carried out; each member was to receive a quarterly report on church progress; plans proceeded for the sesquicentennial and the new building; and Wingate College was to receive \$1,000 from the church budget.

During the period 1940 to 1960, the Wingate Woman's Missionary Union was very active and efficient. The minutes of each meeting were maintained in great detail. Those serving as presidents during this time were: Mrs. John A. Bivens, Mrs. Tris Williams, Mrs. Jack Perry, Mrs. Harry Chaney, Mrs. Albert Mieburg, and Mrs. Burns Hinson. Yearbooks were made and distributed and copies filed with the minutes. These yearbooks were very comprehensive, listing members, attendance, contributions, committees, areas of responsibilities, and during the war years, the men in the armed services from the church, each of whom was "adopted" by one of the five circles. The calendar for the year's programs and meetings, with those responsible, was also included. In 1940 the five circles named themselves after church members they wished to honor. They were: the Julia Griffin, the Alice Jones, the Anna Bivens, the Alice Williams, and the Cowser circles. Later added to these was a Business Woman's Circle which met at night. The WMS regularly appointed leaders for the young people's organizations, the Sunbeams, the Girls' Auxiliary (GAs), and the Young Women's Auxiliary (YWAs), as well as the Royal Ambassadors (RAs) for school age boys. Monthly reports from each of these were made to the Woman's Missionary Society.

In addition to the oversight of the mission organizations for young people, the WMS sponsored mission studies for adults, church-wide observance of the Weeks of Prayer and the accompanying special offerings for foreign and home missions, drives for relief work overseas, as well as contributions to Wingate College for various purposes. The flowers in the church were also their responsibility, and they even undertook the renovation of the rest rooms. They did not neglect ministering to those in the community, visiting newcomers, the sick and the sorrowing. They gave money to the Monroe Hospital.

The programs were varied. Sometimes a circle would present the program for the general meeting. Frequently visiting speakers were brought in, usually students and faculty from the college. The mission field in all parts of the world was studied. Mrs. Anna Bivens was honored as the oldest member, and a circle was organized in the college apartments which were occupied by the families of returned veterans enrolled at Wingate College. The WMS had grown to seven circles, including an extension circle for shut-ins before this period closed. Regular executive meetings were held and specific plans made for their work. Certainly the WMU was a vital part of Wingate Baptist Church with over a hundred women engaged in the work.

RESIDENT MEMBERS of WINGATE BAPTIST CHURCH 1945-46

Ashcraft, Effie

Austin, Bert

Mrs. Bert

Everett (Navy)

Roberta

B. D.

Austin, J. L.

Katie Lee

Annie

Virginia

Austin, Jeff

Palmer

Austin, Olin (Army)

Mrs. Olin

Austin, Roy

B. D. Sr.

Jimmy

Billy

Autry, John

Mrs. John

Johnnie

Tom

Mary Jo

Autry, James

Mrs. James

Baker, M. L.

Mrs. M. L.

Mary Lee

Bass, Mrs. J. B.

Hattie Mae

Braswell, Ray

Mrs. Ray

John Ray

Doris

Braswell, J. Floyd

Braswell, Mrs. H. V.

Braswell, Mrs. A. G.

Jean

Bill (Army)

Bivens, Mrs. W. D.

Giles, Mrs. Hazel

Bivens, R. C.
 Mrs. R. C.
 Braswell, R. S.
 Mrs. R. S.
 Edwards, Ann
 Freeman, Mrs. Luther
 (Alice Ruth)
 Bivens, John A.
 Mrs. John A.
 Robert (Army)
 Edith
 Johnny
 Price, Mrs. R. F.
 Bivens, Curtis
 Mrs. Curtis
 Jones, Mrs. Alice
 Bivens, Mrs. C. M.
 C. M. Jr.
 Helms, Mrs. Frank
 Bivens, Bruce
 Bivens, Carlton
 Mrs. Carlton
 Bivens, Corum
 Mrs. Corum
 Louise
 Billy
 Womble, Mrs. Ila
 Broome, Mrs. Brady
 Wayne
 Bobby
 McRorie, Mary Ellen
 Broome, Henry
 Mrs. Henry
 Brewer, Mrs. T. L.
 Burris, C. C.
 Mrs. C. C.
 Jimmy (Army)
 Mary Ben (in college)
 Allen
 Billy
 Frances

Bivens, Benson
 Mrs. Benson
 Caldwell, Carolyn
 Chaney, Lee W.
 Mrs. Lee W.
 Cobb, Mrs. Hall
 Chaney, Joe G.
 Mrs. Joe G.
 John Vann
 Collins, Edison
 Mrs. Edison
 Judy
 Patsy
 Chaney, Chatam
 Mrs. Chatam
 Chaney, Mrs. Bill
 Blanche
 Chaney, J. H.
 Mrs. J. H.
 Max (Army)
 Heath
 Chaney, Charles
 (Merchant Marine)
 Catherine
 Chaney, Betty Ross
 Chaney, Harry
 Mrs. Harry
 Cowser, Helen
 Crouch, Elizabeth
 Euleese
 Johnny
 Cooper, Hubert
 Mrs. Hubert
 Cuthbertson, Henry
 Mrs. Henry
 Finch, Mrs. Joseph
 Alelaide
 Cuthbertson, Zeb
 Mrs. Zeb
 Deese, John T. (Navy)

Edwards, Wayne
 Mrs. Wayne
 Edwards, William
 Mrs. William
 Ellis, J. B.
 Mrs. J. B.
 Harry
 Boyce (Army)
 Evans, Allie
 Traywick, Mrs. Della
 Flowers, Mrs. Wade
 Funderburk, Bogue
 Mrs. Bogue
 Gaddy, J. B.
 Sam
 Mary
 Ellen
 Eula Ross (in college)
 Griffin, Alfred (Army)
 Mrs. Alfred
 Outen, Mrs. J. B.
 Griffin, Mrs. J. B.
 Kate
 Griffin, Edgar
 Mrs. Edgar
 Griffin, Dwight
 Mrs. Dwight
 Griffin, Della
 Cleone
 Hallman, Mrs. Floy
 Hargett, Shelton
 Mrs. Shelton
 Hargett, Mrs. E. M.
 Hasty, K. G.
 Mrs. K. G.
 Alvin
 Calvin
 Bernice
 Helms, Agnes

Helms, Boyce	Lowery, J. W.	Perry, Mrs. J. J.
Mrs. Boyce	Mrs. J. W.	Walter (Navy)
Jane	John (Army)	Helms, Bernard
Helms, Hugh E.	Lowery, Tom (Army)	Mrs. Bernard
Mrs. Hugh E.	Mrs. Tom	Perry, Fronnie
Helms, Floyd	Lowery, Edwin	Thomas
Mrs. Floyd	Mangum, Mrs. O. B.	Perry, Clarence
Helms, Lester	Mangum, Parks	Mrs. Clarence
Mrs. Lester	Mason, Mrs. George	Perry, Newsom
Jo Ann	Billy	Edwin
Charles	Matheson, Mrs. Oscar	Perry, Mrs. W. M.
Sybil	Maye, F. J.	Perry, Veiger (Monroe)
Helms, Talmage	Mrs. B. J.	Phifer, Carrie
Mrs. Talmage	Coy (Merchant Marines)	Presson, Mrs. Harrison
Frank	McQueen, Virginia	Polk, Mrs. L. C.
Ned (Army)	Michael, Mrs. J. G.	Robinson, E. C.
Jean	Bob (Navy)	Max
Snipes, Mrs. Kate Helms	Moore, Harold	Sandusky, Fred
Helms, Tom (Monroe)	Moore, Mrs. J. L.	Shelton, David K.
Helms, Jay	Moore, Herman	Mrs. David K.
Mrs. Jay	Mrs. Herman	Simpson, Reba
Helms, J. C.	Kathryn	Henry, Jr.
Mrs. J. C.	Jane	Small, A. C.
Steve	Morgan, J. J.	Mrs. A. C.
Horton, R. C.	Mrs. J. J.	Johnny
R. C., Jr. (Merchant	Mullis, Mrs. J. W.	Otha
Marines)	McCollum, Mrs. Dan	A. C. Jr.
Connell, Mrs. Sue Mae	McCollum, Mrs. Howard	Billy
Hogan, J. E.	McCollum, Mrs. James	Shirley
Hinson, Ms. Burns	McIntyre, Sidney	Smith, Baron
Helms, H. Kemp	Mrs. Sidney	Mrs. Baron
Hendricks, A. F.	Nash, Lee	Smith, R. Duran
Mrs. A. F.	Mrs. Lee	Mrs. R. Duran
Laney, Margaret	Carolyn	Williams, Voyle
Lilly, Mrs. H. M.	Orr, Mrs. J. I.	Mrs. Voyle
Love, Sam A.	Bivens, Mrs. J. W.	Peggy
Mrs. Sam A.	Perry, Charles E.	Smith, G. C.
Roy	Sarah Katherine	Mrs. G. C.
Sprague, Mrs. Velma Love		Max
Whitley, George		Benton, Mrs. Robert
Mrs. George		

Smith, Lee J. Mrs. Lee J. Hardy Pearl	Tomberlin, Brice Smith, Ralph Mrs. Ralph	Williams, Mrs. F. A. F.A., Jr. (Navy) Hargett, Mrs. Ellen Williams
Smith, R. Lee Effie	Watson, L. J. Mrs. L. J.	Williams, Mrs. John H. Connie
Smith, Robert Mrs. Robert Barbara	Watts, Mrs. G. C. Whitley, J. B. Mrs. J. B.	Williams, W. Van Mrs. W. Vann E. Vann (Navy) Joe Bivens
Spittle, J. B. Mrs. J. B.	Williams, J. Blanchard Mrs. J. Blanchard Tom Jeff Nell (in college) Tommy	Williams, J. Sim Mrs. J. Sim Williams, Mrs. W. E. L.
Stegall, David Stegall, Mrs. G. D.	Williams, Cecil Mrs. Cecil Ralph (Navy) Agnes Charles Ray	Witmore, Lee Mrs. Lee Betty Jo Witmore, Jess Mrs. Jess
Stewart, W. C. Mrs. W. C. Billy Joe (Army)	Williams, J. Cliff Mrs. J. Cliff	Witmore, Mrs. R. P. Flay
Summerlin, John W. Mrs. John W. Fred John Jr. (Navy)	Williams, Craven T. Mrs. Craven T.	Womble, R. L. Mrs. R. L. Womble, Glenn Mrs. Glenn Bobby
Tarlton, Sam Thayer, Mrs. W. L.	Williams, T. Earl Mrs. T. Earl	Yow, Grace
Walden, Mrs. Kathryn Tomberlin	Williams, Tris A. Mrs. Tris A.	
Tomberlin, Boyce Mrs. Boyce Cleamon Robert Joe	Williams, Mrs. Julia Henry Frank (Army)	

NON-RESIDENT MEMBERS
of
WINGATE BAPTIST CHURCH
1945-46

Atwater, Mrs. A. S.	Bass, Hoyte	Bivens, Mrs. Minnie
Austin, Mrs. D. C.	Bass, Hoyle	Bivens, Broughton
Austin, L. D.	Bass, Ray	Braswell, Burdette
Austin, T. J.	Bass, Mrs. H. E.	Braswell, Mrs. J. Burdette
Bass, Joe	Belk, Mrs. Beulah	Braswell, Irwin

Braswell, Mrs. Vance	Hargett, Mrs. R. C.	Miesieszek, Mrs. Muriel (Muriel Small)
Brooks, Mrs. Hoyt	Haney, Blair	Moore, Mrs. Neal
Broome, Leroy	Helms, Cyrus	Marr, Mrs. George (Margaret Austin)
Broome, Ray	Helms, Parks	McLean, Mrs. G. W. (Rachel Williams)
Chaney, Robert	Helms, Ruby	Nash, Elizabeth
Chaney, Mrs. Morris	Helms, Graham	Nash, Rosa Lee
Chaney, Martha Deane	Helms, Vennie Lee (Mrs. Roy Rollins)	Nash, Clifford
Chaney, Annie Dorcas	Helms, Homer	Overturf, Mrs.
Collins, Margaret	Herren, Joel	Perry, Marshall
Cuthbertson, Mrs. Bruce (Elga Williams)	Herren, Mrs. Joel	Perry, Dwight
Duncan, Mrs. Ward	Hinson, Mrs. Herman	Perry, John H.
Deese, Ruby	Hinson, Mrs. Brady	Perry, T. W.
Douglas, Mrs. W. J.	James, W. H.	Perry, Jack
Ellis, Mazelle	James, Mrs. W. H.	Perry, Joe
Ellis, Verdie Mae	James, Clifford	Perry, Mildred
Eudie, Dorothy	Kale, Mrs. Ernest (Louise Evans)	Phillips, Mrs. Robert Austin
Evans, Mrs. C. S.	Krause, Mrs. Clarice (Clarice Austin)	Polk, L. C.
Funderburke, Mrs. Boyce	Lane, Mrs. Joe	Preslar, Dwight
Gaddy, Bessie	Lamb, C. C., Jr.	Richardson, Mrs. Z. M.
Gaddy, Joe Lee (Marines)	Lamb, Charles	Reed, Mrs. James E.
Gasque, Mrs. Bill	Lewis, Mrs. Bill (Eleanor Evans)	Robinson, John H.
Gathings, William	Lee, Mrs. H. J.	Robinson, Mrs. W. B.
Gillem, Mrs. Oliver	Long, Mrs. H. G.	Robinson, Mary
Griffin, Mrs. Albert	Lovelace, Roberta	Robinson, Lula
Griffin, H. Pearl	Little, Mrs. Dwight (Ruby Williams)	Ross, Robert
Griffin, Mildred	McAttear, Mrs. Paul	Sheppard, Porter
Griffin, Woodrow	Maye, Edith	Sheppard, Mrs. Loris
Griffin, W. P.	Maye, Jewel	Simms, James Idra
Griffin, Bascom	Maye, B. J., Jr.	Small, Sadie Lee (Married)
Griffin, Catherine	Mashburn, Mrs. Bruce	Small, Alice (Married)
Griffin, Ward		Smith, Charles
Griffin, Clara		Spurlin, Mrs. G. C.
Hallman, Robert		
Hargett, R. C.		

Spurlin, Mrs. Presson
Starnes, Mrs. Ellis
Stewart, J. Hoyle
Stewart, James Hoyle
(Merchant Marines)
Stewart, Billy Joe
Stewart, Edd
Stewart, John Neal
Stewart, Robert
Stokes, J. W.

Stokes, Mrs. J. W.
Stokes, Jean
Shumate, Mrs. O'Neill
(Edith Nash)
Tarlton, Mrs. H. Bascom
Timmons, Mrs. John D.
Tomberlin, Josie
Tomberlin, Mrs. J. B.
Walden, Ward
Whitley, Johnny (Army)

Watson, Jack
Williams, J. Robert
Williams, Billie Lee
Williams, Floyd
Williams, James H.
Witmore, J. B.
Witmore, Bernice
Williams, Irene
Williams, Allene
Wrape, H. S.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1960-1984

Remembering the Past — Hoping for the Future

It is with warm feelings of affection and love in Christ that we welcome our former pastors who will lead our reexamination and our former members and friends who will share with us in the recommitment. The same Spirit who had led us in the past seeks to lead us in tomorrow.'

The church began the decade with a spirit of hope and progress. For many years the need for an educational building had been voiced by many in the congregation. In March, just after the spring revival, a committee of T. Earl Williams, R.C. Hargette, J.E. Hogan, Walter F. Perry, Mrs. Dwight Griffin, and Mrs. Burns Hinson began to make definite plans for a building. The committee presented floor plans the next month, April, and an architect was employed. It was advised that \$22,000 must be in hand before the contract would be let. Both the plans and financial arrangements were approved unanimously. Members were grateful when a former pastor, W.C. Link, Jr., and two former members sent contributions to the building fund. On July 30 a "dinner on the grounds" was the occasion for taking a special building fund offering. Senior members of the church were honored guests at this

dinner. On September 4 the church accepted a low bid of \$105,236 to build an 8,000 square-foot building, to air-condition the sanctuary, and to pave a parking area for thirty-five cars. After the morning service on Sunday, September 18, a ground-breaking ceremony was led by T. Earl Williams turning "the first shovel of dirt" and the Reverend Dewey Hobbs admonishing the people to be "laborers together with God." In this same month of September, extensive renovations on the pastorium were completed.

In December 1960 the church borrowed \$80,000 (at 5¾ percent) to continue the construction of the educational building. Repayment was scheduled at \$665 monthly. During the next eighteen months frequent building fund days and "dinners on the grounds" helped pay for this building. Before its completion at the end of 1961, an additional \$5,000 was borrowed for equipment.

Even as the educational building pointed to the future, the congregation also remembered the past. One of Wingate Baptist's landmark days was observed in 1960 when the church reached its 150th birthday. A great celebration was carefully planned and beautifully carried out. Led by the pastor, the Reverend Dewey Hobbs, the following sesquicentennial committees were appointed:

ENTERTAINMENT

John Bivens, Chairman
 Mrs. Joe Chaney
 Mrs. Hal Daniels
 Mrs. Wade Flowers
 C. R. Garrison
 Ned Helms
 Mrs. Burns Hinson
 Tom Lowery
 Harry Myers
 Mrs. J. I. Orr
 Mrs. Jack Perry
 Max Smith
 Mrs. Robert Smith
 Frank Stegall
 Mrs. J. P. Tarlton
 J. D. Thomas
 Mrs. Letha Watkins
 Ben Williams

PROGRAM

Miss Mildred Griffin, Chairman
 Harry Chaney
 Mrs. Sam Gaddy
 Mrs. Dwight Griffin
 Mrs. Benson Bivens
 Mrs. S. J. Little
 Miss Betsy Brooks McGee
 C. E. Perry
 Walter Perry
 Earl Williams
 Ralph C. Williams

PUBLICITY

Earl Underwood, Chairman
 Mrs. Lee Chaney
 Mrs. Charlie Griffin
 Mrs. T. K. Helms
 S. J. Little
 Larry Stewart

The congregation celebrated for four days, October 2-5. All former pastors were invited to attend and to participate. Dr. Baker James Cauthen, secretary of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, opened the program with an address. Over five hundred attended to enjoy the following festivities:

SESQUI-CENTENNIAL SERVICES
October 2-5, 1960

Sunday, October 2

- 10:40 a.m. Worship Hour: "Go Ye Into All the World"
 Speaker: Dr. Baker James Cauthen, Secretary
 Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board
- 12:30 p.m. "Dinner on the Grounds"
- 7:30 p.m. Worship Hour: "The Authority of the Word"
 Speaker: The Rev. David K. Shelton
 Major, U.S. Air Force Chaplaincy

Monday, October 3

- 7:30 p.m. Worship Hour: "The Competence and Worth of the Individual"
 Speaker: The Rev. W. C. Link, Jr.
 Pastor, Second Baptist Church
 Liberty, Missouri

Tuesday, October 4

- 7:30 p.m. Worship Hour: "The Glory in the Church"
 Speaker: The Rev. Coy Muckle
 Pastor, Eason Memorial Baptist Church
 Eastover, South Carolina

Wednesday, October 5

- 7:30 p.m. Worship Hour: "God in Christ"
 Speaker: Dr. Walter E. Sanders
 Pastor, Boswell Street Baptist Church
 Marietta, Georgia

"Many of those attending all the services have said that it was one of the most glorious experiences ever held in the church."² Flowers in the sanctuary honored Mrs. John Herron Williams, W. Vann Williams, and M.L. Baker. Communion trays were given in memory of the late Nathaniel Bivens, and a pulpit Bible was given by the children of the late John W. Bivens. Each evening some time was spent in "remembering the past." Scores of friends and former members came from some distance to celebrate the 150th anniversary of a faithful church. Perhaps the

most moving event was the dedication of a great number of young people to "go into all the world" and give their Christian witness.

The day-to-day work of the church continued in that year. All church employees, except the pastor, were to be included in the Social Security program beginning July 31, 1960. Max G. Reese was ordained into the ministry; a love offering was taken for Mr. Lee Smith and his beloved daughter "Miss Effie"; and the Cooperative Program contribution was increased by 5 percent. It was also the year Wingate College dedicated its new auditorium (Austin-Webb Memorial).

During the year 1961 the congregation continued its effort to pay off the indebtedness of the \$150,000 educational building. "Dinners on the grounds" and building fund days were still held frequently. On July 30 the dinner honored the senior members of the church. Joe McLean, a former professor of mathematics at Wingate College, was recommended to enter Southeastern Seminary to prepare for the ministry. His marriage to Betsy Brooks McGee of the Wingate College history department was a happy event for all who knew them. Revival services were held October 6-13. The Sunday evening worship hour was changed to 5:30 p.m.

In 1962 repairs were made to the pastorium and the church kitchen. Mr. Hobbs participated for the second year in the Princeton Institute of Theology in lieu of attending the Southern Baptist Convention. The congregation voted that the election of deacons take place the first Sunday in November and that they assume their duties January 1. At this time the board of deacons also served as the budget committee. The year 1963 passed with little of note except "dinner on the grounds" and the granting of a week's sick leave to the pastor.

On July 26, 1964, Mr. Hobbs resigned after having served for ten years and six months as pastor to accept a call to Marion, North Carolina. Reluctantly the church accepted his resignation and on August 23 with "dinner on the grounds" presented a love offering and resolutions of appreciation to him and his family for their years of work at Wingate.

Before the resignation of Mr. Hobbs, the church had begun to make plans to broaden its ministry to the community. In January 1964 at the request of the pastor and the board of deacons, the church had agreed that a committee should be appointed to study the possibilities of the sponsoring of a day nursery-kindergarten. This committee was composed of Betty Barnes (Mrs. Robert), Bernard Helms, Mizelle Fletcher

(Mrs. Sidney), Gladys Hinson (Mrs. Burns), and Ralph Williams. S.J. Little, chairman of the board of deacons, and the pastor, Dewey Hobbs, served as ex-officio members. This effort was conceived and carried out as a mission project to serve the community. The committee worked diligently and studied the possibilities, leadership, personnel, how to adapt to the local situation, time involved, health and fire requirements, and the minimum number of children which would be necessary to operate economically. A questionnaire was prepared to be completed by those who would use the facility. The church supplied the building space, a play area was fenced in, equipment was secured, and insurance and other requirements were met. In the same brochure that carried the requirements for admission and application forms, the purpose was clearly defined as follows:

1. To give children guidance appropriate to the stage of development.
2. To help the children learn to live together happily.
3. To help children grow in their ability to express themselves through language, art, music, and other mediums of expression (especially in kindergarten).
4. To provide opportunities for the children to enrich their understanding of the world in which they live.
5. To provide good health habits, proper eating, cleanliness, safety, and rest.

Because we believe that Christianity is a way of life, not merely a doctrine, we attempt to relate Bible truths to every phase of our program.

The charges were minimal: \$10 per week for day nursery and \$15 for the kindergarten with adjustments for more than one child in a family. In April 1964 the day nursery opened under the direction of Mrs. Betty (Robert) Barnes, who was followed by Mrs. Elsie Yarborough. Several part-time assistants were added to the program and served most ably. Mrs. Z.G. Ray (Wilma Morgan) began as director of the five-year kindergarten in 1964. The pastor had full oversight of the project. The number of the children increased so rapidly that by March 1968 there was a need to limit the number in the kindergarten. At that time, Dot Chaney (Mrs. Charles) was in charge of that area.

The notes of Mizelle Fletcher, secretary of the day nursery committee, were excellent and showed that there was much time spent by this group of dedicated people in continued planning and supervision. In

1969 Mrs. J.B. Helms directed the kindergarten and Judy Edwards the day nursery. Many others have also made valuable contributions to what has to be a proud accomplishment of Wingate Baptist Church. The kindergarten was phased out from 1973 to 1976 when Wingate Elementary School added its kindergarten. Later the church added the much-needed "after school" program to provide for children when both parents were employed. It has not been an easy operation. The church has met the requirements and maintained high standards. However, it has been the general consensus that it has been well worth the effort and expense.

After the resignation of Mr. Hobbs in July 1964, the church immediately began its search for a new pastor. The Reverend Eugene Walter from near Whiteville, North Carolina, accepted the call and held his first service February 3, 1965. He was joined the next week by Mrs. Walter and their two children Steve and Terry.

At the close of the year 1964 the church budget showed a balance of \$325, which was given to the Reverend J.J. Cowsert, who had served as interim pastor. He and Mrs. Cowsert, upon retirement as missionaries to Brazil, had come to Wingate to make their home with their daughter Helen Cowsert, a faculty member at Wingate College. He endeared himself to this community as he preached, visited, and served in it until his death.

Mrs. Ned Helms (Helen) accepted the position of church secretary June 1, 1965. She succeeded Mrs. Nan Stewart, who had served faithfully and well, fully deserving the vote of appreciation extended to her by the church for her unselfish service. Mr. Oliver Yost was a part-time music director at the church while a member of the Wingate College faculty. When he left the college in June 1965, it was necessary to fill this position. The church discussed the possibility of securing a full-time director of music and education, but took no action.

In the summer of 1965 an effort was made to enlarge the church library, and an opportunity was given to the membership to purchase books for this project. Mrs. Byrns Coleman (Alice) worked long and hard to buy and catalogue books and put the library in workable condition. Special emphasis was given to the children's collection to serve the many youngsters in the congregation. Help was made available for those teaching and serving in the church. The congregation has been grateful for the volunteers who have labored to improve this resource and make it available to all those who wish to use it. Also this

year (1965), Mr. Walter was granted expense money for a week in school and to attend the Baptist World Alliance meeting in Miami in June 1965.

In 1967 it was decided that no special offerings were to be taken except for foreign missions, home missions, and the fifth Sunday debt retirement. The matter of an appropriate time to hold church conferences had long been a matter of discussion. On December 17, 1967, the church considered making it a part of the morning worship hour, but no decision was made, and after referring the matter to the deacons, it remained the same — following the church service.

Three men were ordained to preach by the Wingate Church in 1968: John Perry, Jr., William Stover, and Floyd Helms, Jr. Also Morris Meadows was licensed to preach the same year. The church conference in April 1968 adopted a set of guidelines for the church's information and to become a part of the church record. These guidelines with later amendments may be found in the appendix.

An impressive service of dedication of children became an annual event in the life of the church on May 12, 1968, and has continued to be one of the most appreciated parts of our church program. Parents of children born the previous year dedicate themselves and their children to Christian training and service, and the congregation in turn pledges to them support in this most important responsibility. The Sunday School was reorganized in 1968 to meet the standards set up by the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. The letter to the association October 13, 1968, listed:

Resident Members — 531	Non-Resident Members — 26
Average Sunday School Attendance — 253	
Church Expenses	\$61,421
Missions	23,034
	<hr/>
Total	\$84,455

The church conference in 1969 voted than any recommendation of the board of deacons must be printed in the newsletter one week before it was to be brought before the church for a vote. Air-conditioning units were purchased that year; \$6,500 was allocated to employ a director of music and education; and it was decided that 15 percent of the total budget would be given to the Cooperative Program. The church, continuing a long practice of cooperation with area churches, voted in

February to hold a joint Bible School in the summer with the Wingate Methodist Church and for the Wingate Baptist pastor and deacons to exchange places of service the next month with the Elizabeth Baptist Church, a traditional black church. The church also sponsored a special service honoring Boy Scouts in 1969. Needed repairs to the basement and balcony were made at a cost of \$17,000; and the ceiling was repaired and the sanctuary painted for \$2,500.

The Wingate community and the whole area jointed the family of C.C. Burris in grief at his death in 1969. Mr. Burris, dean and president of Wingate College, pastor of numerous Baptist churches, teacher, counselor, and friend, was loved by all who knew him. His death was a great loss, but his memory will be long cherished.

The year 1970 began with the recarpeting of the sanctuary at a cost of \$4,645. Mr. Jack Musten, a former Wingate student, led a youth revival in the summer, which was an inspiration to all who attended. Mrs. T. Earl Williams presented the church a cross to be placed above the choir loft in memory of her husband, a life-long member of the church who had served it in many capacities as an effective leader. In December it was voted that the budget must be made available to the church membership through the newsletter at least one week prior to its presentation. Two special gifts were made in 1971. Mrs. N. Charlie Griffin ("Miss Mary") donated the glass-enclosed bulletin board in the front of the church. Mrs. Dwight (Flay) Griffin asked that the Dwight Griffin memorial fund purchase furniture for the youth room in the basement. A special service was held in July 1971 for those of retirement age. It was especially enjoyed because the entire service was conducted by those of the congregation who had reached their "golden years." During that summer, the "Sixty-Plus" group was organized.

... Mr. Walter invited older members of the church to come together in celebration of those having a birthday during the month. He made the statement, "I do not know what to call the group, unless we call you the Sixty-Plus group," so this name has remained ... The group meets monthly and has taken a number of trips and are active supporters of the church programs.³

The matter of the old Wingate cemetery, located on Highway 74, had long been debated and investigated. It was no longer used for burials, maintenance was a problem, and its future was uncertain. Several committees had worked on the problem. In 1971 Mr. John A. Bivens

was asked to check on preserving or moving it. After surveying its boundaries, conferring with older members of the congregation, and finally seeking legal advice, the conclusion was reached that nothing could be done without the consent of every family whose members were buried there. Each family had purchased its own plot and still owned it, and since many descendants of these families could not be located, the matter was closed. The church reported a membership of 503 and a budget of \$88,000 in 1971.

The budget for 1972 included the provision that any designated gift for purposes other than those specified by the church must have the approval of the finance committee or else be approved in church conference. In March of that year the church voted that the deacons were to appoint the day care-kindergarten committee and that the committee would be answerable to that board. The following committee was appointed: Alice Coleman, Myzelle Fletcher, Jacksie Maye, Jerry Kirkman, and S.J. Little. The church secretary was to serve the committee as advisor concerning finance. It was also voted that the "Budget Committee be composed of the Board of Deacons, or a committee from the Board plus the church treasurer."⁴

On March 12, 1972, the church decided to sell the parsonage because the pastor wished to purchase his own home. In lieu of the use of the parsonage, the church granted his request for a housing allowance. Accordingly, the parsonage was sold to Wingate College for \$20,000. When it was voted that the money would be used to pay off the church indebtedness, Dr. Budd E. Smith, president of the college, proposed that the college contribute the remainder so that the total indebtedness of \$21,208.72 could be retired. This was accomplished March 31, 1972, and Wingate Baptist Church was again debt free. Plans were made in May for a special service to commemorate the fiftieth year in the present building. On June 18, 1972, the pastor, Eugene Walter, baptized seventeen new members; that same day in the church conference, he tendered his resignation to be effective September 1. Shortly thereafter, he accepted a position with the Piedmont Mental Health Center and the church granted his request for release on July 30.

At the death of J.B. Helms, a very beloved member of the church, resolutions were passed honoring his memory, and a copy was sent to the *Biblical Recorder*. Harry Chaney, who had been the runner-up in the last election of deacons, was chosen to fill Mr. Helms' place on the board, thus setting a precedent for filling future vacancies.⁵

The Reverend Everette Chapman accepted the position as minister, effective January 14, 1973, and occupied the pulpit for the first time on January 28. The church extended its thanks to Aaron Tyner, who had supplied the pulpit effectively since August. Mr. Chapman and his wife Mildred presented themselves for membership and the next week moved into the community with their two sons Phil and Chris. The Chapmans came from Gaffney, South Carolina, where he had served as associate pastor of the First Baptist Church. He was a graduate of Furman University and Southeastern Seminary.

Plans were immediately laid for a homecoming Sunday on September 23. It was indeed a day of remembering and rejoicing. More than five hundred former and present members gathered to renew old friendships, to worship, and to remember days that were past. Mrs. Robert Barnes and Mrs. Ralph Williams directed the music. Tom Lowery led the congregation singing. Walter Perry introduced the speakers, and the pastor, Everette Chapman, welcomed the large congregation. There follows a part of the program:

DINNER ON THE GROUNDS
(Immediately Following Morning Worship)

CONGREGATIONAL HYMN SING

To close the day's activities, there will be an old-fashioned hymn sing beginning shortly after lunch. The various choirs of the church will be sharing in this service, and various soloists and singing groups will be performing as well.

OUR GUEST SPEAKERS

Dr. William C. Link, Pastor
Second Baptist Church
Liberty, Missouri

Dr. Walter E. Sanders
Chaplain
Dorothea Dix Hospital
Raleigh, North Carolina

The Reverend J. Dewey Hobbs, Pastor
First Baptist Church
Marion, North Carolina

(Note: Dr. Link's topic was "The Miracle of the Church"; Dr. Sanders spoke on "Christian Service"; and the Reverend Dewey Hobbs' subject was "Jesus Christ, the Same, Yesterday, Today, and Forever." Flowers were placed in the church sanctuary in loving memory of Mr. and Mrs. John Herron Williams.)

HOMECOMING COMMITTEE

Walter E. Perry, Chairman
Mr. and Mrs. John A. Bivens
Mrs. Sam Gaddy
Miss Mildred Griffin
Tony Maye
Mrs. R. G. Stewart

GREETINGS FROM OUR MINISTER

Homecoming Day, 1973, is an exciting time for me. I have looked forward happily to the opportunity to meet those men who have preceded me to the pulpit of Wingate Baptist Church. I stand humbly thankful that God should allow me to follow in such a train. I am excited also at the thought of meeting many former members and friends of this church. The day is a good day.

We who make up the present expression of the Church at Wingate welcome our former ministers and members back home and express warm greetings to all our visitors. We hope this day will be a meaningful one for you. You have made our day better by having come this way.

Special guests, too numerous to mention, came from Missouri, Virginia, Georgia, South Carolina, and literally from Manteo to Murphy to share in this joyous occasion. The litany of thanksgiving that was used was timeless in its application:

Pastor: We are mindful of thy watchcare and guidance, O Lord, throughout the days of our past. Thou art the basis of our heritage, and all that we have accomplished thou hast supported and enabled. Thou art the God who hast blessed our past history.

People: For thy love and guidance in the days that are past but still remembered, we thank thee, O Lord.

Pastor: We have found thee, O Lord, on every mountain top we have stood upon, and when we have walked through deep valleys, thou hast been close at hand.

People: For thy presence in all the experiences of our lives, we praise thee, O Lord.

Pastor: As thou hast shaped our past, and as thou hast brought us to this point in our pilgrimage, thou art the essential force in our lives here and now, the ever-contemporary God of young and old alike.

People: For being the essence of our Here and Now, we thank thee, O Lord.

Pastor: O thou shaper of our past and life force in our present, we look to thee for future guidance and strength. We wish no greatness that thou dost not ordain. We seek to walk no paths nor climb any mountains unless thou dost lead the way. Be with us and be our God and let us be thy people.

People: Lead us, Lord, lead us in thy righteousness. Make thy way plain to us, and help us walk therein.

Ever mindful of its responsibilities for Christian ministry, the church decided on May 6, 1973, to receive a free-will offering after each observance of the Lord's Supper to be used for "the ministry to those within and without our fellowship."⁶ Also at that time \$500 was provided for "youth ministries." After considering the purchase of a used bus to serve the activities of the church, the congregation voted and immediately raised \$8,904 to purchase a new bus. In October the "Jones' property" was purchased from Hallie J. Bivens for \$45,000. This bordered the church property and consisted of one and three-fourths acres of land with a house. The dwelling was renovated for use as a residence for the minister of music and education who was employed in 1974. It was in this year that Mr. John A. Bivens completed and published the *History of the Union Association 1919-1970*.³

The procedure for filling vacancies on the board of trustees was further defined as follows:

1. If less than six months before an election, the vacancy not to be filled.
2. A special election to be held if the unexpired term is longer than six months.
3. If two years or less is left, the elected deacon to be eligible for reelection.⁷

A college student, Bert Woods, was employed as youth minister for the summer at \$40 per week. Mrs. J.B. Helms graciously furnished his housing. In May a special service was held in the college auditorium by

the area churches to honor Dr. Budd E. Smith, who had retired as president of Wingate College. Dr. and Mrs. Smith had served the church far beyond the call of duty. They both had entered wholeheartedly into the affairs of the church and community as well as the college. They will long be remembered for their service here. On August 18, 1974, the "watch-care" status was revived, which encouraged college students to ally themselves with Wingate Baptist Church while attending school. The church pledged itself to aid and guide them in any way possible. At the same meeting, \$200 from the Sunday School budget was allocated to defray the expenses of a teacher training clinic. The associational letter for 1974 recorded 579 members, 50 additions, a Sunday School enrollment of 465, and total moneys received as \$116,350.

Woodrow Funderburke was employed in 1974 as associate pastor with special responsibilities in music and education at a salary of \$10,000 plus housing and fringe benefits. It was agreed that his wife Shirley be paid \$1,800 to serve as church organist. A fund for acquiring cushions for the church pews was begun in September, and the church year was changed to run from September 1 through August 31. In 1973 renovations were made to the church office and parking lot.

Early in 1976 the fifth Sunday was again designated as debt-retirement day (Jones' property). Job descriptions were set up for the pastor, the associate pastor, and the church secretary. Fourteen new Christians were baptized in August. With the time for election of deacons approaching, that body recommended that the church membership should carefully consider the election of women to the board. Elaine Kirkman (Mrs. Jerry) became the first women elected to serve on that body. Wingate College was in the midst of a campaign to raise money to build a student union and, true to its tradition, Wingate Baptist Church joined the effort pledging \$5,000 to be paid over a three-year period. The year of 1976 ended with some new guidelines for the board of deacons. Seven were to be elected that year, five for three years, one for two years, and one for one year, the latter being eligible for reelection. Thereafter five would be elected each year for three-year terms (not to be eligible for reelection for one year). The board was thus enlarged to fifteen deacons.

In February 1977 Dr. Jerry Surratt (Wingate College professor) was appointed to head a committee to develop a constitution and by-laws for the church; church pews were cushioned at a cost of \$4,000; Vickie

Barrett was employed as minister of education and director of the day care operations; and Carolyn Gaddy (Mrs. Sam) became the first woman to be elected Sunday School director. In October an important decision was made setting up a plan for a deacon ministry. Each deacon was given a list of families whom he or she was to serve along with the pastor in any way possible. October 16, 1977, was celebrated as "Loyalty Day," a stewardship promotion day. That day 420 attended Sunday School, 610 were present in morning worship, and an offering of \$17,500 was received. This was followed by "dinner on the grounds."

Since the first Woman's Missionary Society was organized in the church in 1897, the WMU has continued to be a vital part of the life and work of Wingate Baptist Church. During the period since 1960, the following women have presided over this important organization: Mrs. Benson Bivens, Mrs. Baron Smith, Mrs. John A. Bivens, Mrs. Cliff (Ramona) Adams, Mrs. Jerry Kirkman, Miss Helen Cowser, Miss Mildred Griffin, Mrs. Anne McConnell, Mrs. Tom Corts, and Mrs. R.V. Greer. At the end of the first decade, in 1970, the GAs Forward Steps program culminated in a "coronation" celebration in which thirty-four girls and twelve leaders participated. This program not only enriches the lives of many girls but also has benefited the entire congregation because out of it have come some of the present leaders of the church. The seventy-fifth anniversary of the Woman's Missionary Union of the Southern Baptist Convention was observed in April 1963, and Wingate shared in this celebration with special programs and attendance at district meetings. As the convention-wide WMU has occasionally suggested structural changes in the local organizations, Wingate WMU has conformed. The mission education groups for the young are more closely graded. The organization sponsors two levels of Mission Friends, one for two- and three-year-olds and the other for four- and five-year-olds. GAs (now Girls in Action) include girls from first grade through sixth grade. Acteens enroll girls from the seventh through the twelfth grades. The WMU includes Baptist Women and Baptist Young Women for adults. There are two women's organizations. The day group has two circles, and the night group has four. These concern themselves with home and foreign missions, "adopt" foreign students at Wingate College, and sponsor an International Student Dinner each year.

The goals for the special mission offerings have steadily increased: the 1983 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions had a

goal of \$5,000 and the 1984 Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions had a goal of \$2,000. Mission education and prayer support for the missionary effort are still at the heart of the WMU work beginning in Wingate and North Carolina and extending to all the world.

Let us return to the church itself. There were no minutes from October 16, 1977, to February 5, 1978, at which time Mr. Chapman was granted a thirty-day sick leave. On March 12, he resigned, and the resignation was accepted with his salary to continue through June 1978. A member of long standing said the following just before Mr. Chapman's final year at Wingate:

Under his leadership the spirit of the church, the membership of the church and the activities in and through the church indicate a growing fellowship of warmth and love. During this time an activities bus has greatly added to the ministry of the church. The church has its largest budget which includes outreach to the local ministries, to the world hunger needs, the Cooperative Program and special mission love offerings . . . the church has a membership of 627, which is the largest recorded, and the interest and membership continues to grow . . . ⁸

As is always the case for those who believe in the Lord God, Wingate Baptist Church was fortunate that the Reverend David B. Smith was the campus minister at Wingate College and consented to serve as interim pastor. With understanding and loving kindness, he helped the church to bind up its wounds and continue the work it was meant to do. He served until August, when he felt his duties at the college demanded he give up the church position. The Reverend R.V. Greer, a former college Bible teacher and a member of the church, took over as interim minister September 17. A pastor selection committee was elected by the church and began their difficult job.

It was announced in church conference April 30, 1978, that Mrs. Anne H. McConnell had been accepted for volunteer work by the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention and would leave in August for service in Beirut, Lebanon. The church voted to support her with its prayers and to write a letter to the Foreign Mission Board recommending her. Later it agreed to pay her hospitalization insurance while she was abroad. In the same conference, it was also decided to buy the S.J. Little house for \$40,000 for use as a parsonage.

The day care committee recommended in January of 1979 that the

center be closed May 31, 1979. The committee reasoned that adequate day care was available in the surrounding area without the continuance of the church-sponsored facility. Considerable opposition arose in the congregation to this motion; it was tabled at that time and later defeated. The rationale was that no care was available comparable to that given in the church center. As a result, Mrs. Wayne (Brenda) Tomberlin was employed as director, and the center continued. The parents of children who had attended the Baptist center were most complimentary of the care their children had received and were loath to deny such an opportunity to future children.

In March 1979 a long-range planning committee was appointed. The members were: Tom Williams, chairman, Elaine Kirkman, Myzelle Fletcher, Walter Perry, Jerry Thomas, Tom Corts, Suzy Setzer, L.L. Helms, Helen Cowsert, Ed Hogan, and Wayne Edwards. After working for two years they made the following report to the congregation on April 1, 1981:

Over the period of the last 24 months, your Long Range Planning Committee has met numerous times in an effort to formulate and place priorities on directions for Wingate Baptist Church to grow. After much deliberation and prayerful study, we make the following recommendations:

1. That the complete membership of Wingate Baptist Church participate in a Stewardship Education Program through Sunday School Class Guidance with a goal of 100% membership participation in giving.

This program should be co-ordinated under the guidance of our Finance Committee which may decide that a Stewardship Subcommittee is needed.

2. That Wingate Baptist Church participate in an active outreach program designed to attract newcomers and unchurched in our community. This will include Wingate College students.

We would propose that this be achieved through the formation of an outreach or welcome committee. These first two programs should be entered into on an active basis no later than the fall of 1981.

3. That the church elect a remodeling committee for the Sanctuary Building.

This should be accomplished no later than June 1, 1981. The remodeling committee should be prepared to begin actual remodeling in the calendar year 1982 and completion no later than calendar year 1983.

4. That Wingate Baptist Church establish a remodeling fund. That a committee be elected to promote this remodeling fund.

This is to be accomplished no later than June 1, 1981. That a goal of \$100,000 be set for this fund and that the amount be achieved no later than December 31, 1981.

5. The Wingate Baptist Church Day Care Committee should explore the possibility of establishing a 4-year old kindergarten.

If this is deemed appropriate, the program should be implemented no later than the school year beginning the fall of 1981.

6. As Wingate Baptist Church progresses in the above outlined programs and we begin to see improvements in Stewardship and Operational budgets, the personnel committee should explore the possibility of employing additional staff personnel for education.

This may be either as a Youth Director or Associate Pastor, but emphasis should be on expanding our educational programs and activities.

7. That Wingate Baptist Church refurbish the existing Educational Building and begin the construction of additional education space including a new kitchen and fellowship hall.

This to begin in 1985 and should be completed by 1987.

The cassette ministry was begun in 1974 and quickly became a very important part of the church activities. The 1984 Visitation and Cassette Committee is made up of Jay Taylor, chairman, Mrs. Nan Stewart (at whose suggestion the program was begun), and Miss Mildred Griffin. Jay Taylor tapes the morning services and copies are distributed by the committee, who make an average of thirty-five to forty visits each month to the homes of those unable to attend services of the church. The visits are as greatly appreciated as the tapes. Plans to acquire new equipment for this ministry are now being aided by a number of memorial gifts.

On March 11, 1979, the church guidelines were amended as follows:⁹

Deacon-appointed committees should be:

- a) Budget-Finance
- b) Church Properties
- c) Day Care Center (two deacons, three at-large members)
- d) Hospitality (greeters)
- e) Nominating

Looking toward the remodeling of the church plant, a architect's fee was set at \$1,500 and so authorized by a church vote. Mitch Eudy asked to be sponsored for a mission trip to the Dominican Republic, and at the suggestion of the Wingate Volunteer Fire Department, he was given the \$500 grant that had been budgeted for the fire department.

On the recommendation of the pastor selection committee, Dr. Roy N. Ford, Jr. of Amherst, Virginia, was extended a call to the pastorate of Wingate Baptist Church. The call was accepted by letter of August 5, 1979. He acted as moderator at the church conference September 16, 1979. He and his wife June and son Kevin occupied the newly renovated parsonage.

The budget for 1980 reached a new high of \$139,543, of which \$22,000 was to be allocated for ministry to others. Undesignated gifts were to go to a fund to provide a new organ for the sanctuary. The resignation of Mr. Funderburke, who was in charge of music and education, was accepted June 8, 1980. Mrs. Betty Barnes as director and Mrs. Ann Williams as organist took over the responsibility for the music on a part-time basis in July, and in August they were elected as permanent part-time staff members in these capacities. The church decided to employ a full-time minister of music and education as soon as feasible. After a thorough investigation, the committee reported that the combination was almost impossible to find and recommended that Dr. Ron Bostic, head of the music department at Wingate College, be employed as part-time music director at \$6,000 per year. He assumed not only the direction of the adult choir but also the supervision of all the music activities of the church. Mrs. Ann Williams remained as church organist. During this same conference, a motion to change the business meetings of the church to Wednesday night failed to carry.

In August of 1980 Dr. Ford, having built his own home, vacated the parsonage. At the recommendation of the board of deacons, the church decided to retain the property and rent it on a yearly basis. Lawrence Childs, a consultant, was employed to prepare a study of the church in

order that it might more clearly understand its present condition and prepare intelligently for the future. Mitch Eudy was recommended for study at Southeastern Seminary, and \$1,700 was allocated to support him as a student missionary.

Bob Lowman, a ministerial student at Wingate College, was employed as youth minister in September 1981. Bob served in this capacity during the school year until May 1983 making a very great contribution to the young people of the church.

When the budget for 1981 was passed, there was a statement included that 12.28% of the total should be given through the Cooperative Program and that 6.04% of that amount should go to Wake Forest University. Such a vote was necessary because of the changed status between Wake Forest and the Baptist State Convention. The two agencies were no longer bound by a charter but rather by a covenant agreement. In view of such change, Wake Forest could no longer share automatically in the education allotment from the Cooperative Program. Each church must individually agree that a portion of its Cooperative Program moneys go to the university. Wingate Church has consistently supported Wake Forest from its very beginning. It was appropriate that it continue to do so.

The budget for 1982 was \$145,554, some \$12,000 more than the previous year. Two special gifts were made to the church in 1983. On January 16 it was announced that \$4,410 had been received from the Ruth D. Horton estate. Mrs. Horton had taught at Wingate College for forty years and had continued to live in Wingate after her retirement. The deacons recommended that this gift be added to the building fund and that later some tangible memorial be suitably marked. Mrs. J.B. Helms (Effie) paid for the restoration of the old pulpit Bible which the church bought in 1877. It is now displayed in an appropriate case at the side entrance.

In the attempt to carry out the recommendations made by the Long Range Planning Committee of 1981, Baron Smith, Jim Edwards, Mary Sims, Jerry Thomas, and Charles Ray Williams worked with the architect who had been chosen by the congregation and completed plans for the remodeling of the sanctuary and the adjacent rooms of the main building. The finished proposal was accepted, but the plan for financing the work failed to carry in the church conference. The decision was made to do the necessary work as the need presented itself and sufficient funds were available to pay for the work without indebtedness. By

1984 a ramp for the disabled and the painting of the outside trim on the main building had been completed.

Miss Lynn Cox, a Wingate College student, was employed full-time during the summer of 1983 to work with the school-age children and young people of the church during the vacation months and as part-time minister of youth for the '83-'84 school year. In January 1984 the congregation employed her as Youth Corps Worker for the summer of 1984, and the appointment was approved by the Baptist State Convention in March. Miss Cox has done an excellent job, and Wingate Baptist Church feels fortunate in having her work with the youth.

The following notice appeared in the church letter on April 25, 1984:

April 1964 the day care first opened its doors to serve this community. This means it is observing its 20th year.

It has been a learning experience through many trials and errors (these were bound to come). But on the positive side, we believe that the good times and progress far outweigh any negative response to the program.

Today, the Day Care serves as many (or more) families in the community as it has at any time in its history. The staff of five full-time and eight part-time employees care for the following children:

Infants	4
One Years	8
Two Years	8
Three Years	10
Four Years	19
After School	34
Total	<hr/> 83

We salute Mrs. Brenda Tomberlin, Director, and her staff for providing such excellent care.

The church voted in 1983 to celebrate the 175th anniversary of its founding, beginning in January 1985 and climaxing in a homecoming April 21, 1985. Dr. W.C. Link will be the speaker that day. All former pastors now living have been invited to attend. It is hoped that all friends far and wide as well as those close by will join us in this happy occasion.

In tracing 175 years of a church's history, it is difficult to choose what should be included and what should be omitted. Meadow Branch-Wingate Baptist Church has withstood many difficult times and encountered serious obstacles, all of which cannot be recounted. What can be said with certainty is that through these years this comparatively small group of believers has left a heritage of strong convictions, great loyalty to their faith in God, and a tradition of lending a helping hand to all who are in need at home and abroad. During much of its history, members have made genuine sacrifices in spite of poverty and uncertain times. As Christians they never expected an easy time in the full knowledge that the followers of Jesus Christ were never promised freedom from trouble, doubt, and fear. It is hoped that present and future generations will emulate the best of the ideals which have shaped this institution and will strive to make a better world in which to live. The following has frequently appeared in the bulletins of Wingate Baptist Church:

To all who mourn and need comfort,
To all who are weary and need rest,
To all who are friendless and need friendship,
To all who are homeless and need sheltering love,
To all who pray and all who do not, but should,
To all who sin and need a Saviour,
To all who love the Master and would serve Him:

This church opens wide its door, and in
The name of the Lord Jesus says — Welcome.

May it forever be thus.

APPENDIX

AN ACT TO INCORPORATE THE WINGATE SCHOOL IN UNION CO.

The General Assembly of North Carolina do enact:

Section 1. That F. M. Sutton, G. W. Simpson, B. F. Parker, J. B. Mangum, R. H. James, R. F. Beasley, Jonathan Gordon, J. J. Godfrey, J. L. Bennett, Thos. E. Williams, O. M. Sanders, D. A. Covington, J. C. Sikes, J. A. Bivens, and J. W. Bivens, and their successors, be and are hereby declared to be a body politic, and corporate, for the purpose of conducting under the auspices of the Union White Baptist Association, a school of high grade in the village of Wingate, in Union County, for the education of boys and girls, to be known as the Wingate School, and by this name and style shall have perpetual succession, and a common seal, and shall be able in law to sue and be sued, plead and be impleaded, in all the courts of this State; shall take, receive and possess all moneys, goods, chattels and bonds which may be given them, and shall apply the same according to the wish of the donors to the purpose herein declared; and they shall have power, by purchase or otherwise to take, demand, hold, and possess rents, lands, tenements, and hereditaments in special trust and confidence, and apply the same together with the benefits arising therefrom, for the purpose of supporting the school to be known and styled as "The Wingate School."

Sec. 2. That the full term of office of trustees shall be six years; provided that the first five, mentioned in Section 1, of this act, shall hold office until the annual meeting of the said association in Eighteen hundred and ninety-eight (1898), second five, until said meeting in Nineteen hundred (1900), and third five until said meeting in Nineteen hundred and two (1902), and their successors for six years from the date of their election; subject however to removal on the part of said association for improper conduct, inefficiency or neglect of duty.

Sec. 3. That all trustees shall be members in good standing of churches belonging to the Union Baptist Association and be elected by said association in regular session, except in case of death, disqualification or removal from office, on the part of a member whose place shall

be supplied by the Board of trustees until the next annual meeting of said association.

Sec. 4. That if any one of the trustees shall fail to attend a meeting of the said trustees continuously for a term of two years, the association, at a regular meeting, may declare his seat vacant and proceed to fill the vacancy.

Sec. 5. That said trustees shall give a full and accurate report of the status and financial condition of the said school at each annual session of the said association.

Sec. 6. That said trustees shall have power to appoint a local executive committee to perform such duties as may be designated by said trustees.

Sec. 7. That said trustees shall have power to appoint their own President, Secretary and Treasurer, and such teachers and other officers in and over said school, as they shall deem qualified to discharge the duties of the several officers, and may remove the same for misbehavior, or neglect of duty, provided that all teachers shall be members of some regular constituted Baptist church. They shall also have power to make all rules and regulations, not inconsistent with the laws of this State, for the government of said school.

Sec. 8. That the said trustees shall hold an annual meeting at the close of each spring term, and such other meetings from time to time as necessity may require, and five trustees present shall constitute a quorum at all meetings for the transaction of business after five days notice of time, place and object of meeting shall have been given verbally or mailed to all members of said board of trustees.

Sec. 9. That the lands and property belonging to said trustees for the benefit of said school shall be and the same are hereby exempted from all kinds of public taxation.

Sec. 10. That said trustees are hereby empowered to receive donations and to hold property, both real and personal, for educational purposes; but said trustees shall have no power to purchase property and contract debts, or pledge their credit or the credit of the association without the authority and consent of a two-thirds vote of said association in its annual meeting; with the consent, however, of said association so obtained the said trustees may purchase real estate, sell, convey or lease any of their property, pledge their faith or credit, borrow money for the necessary expenses of said school, or for the purpose of making improvements in their property, or advancing the

cause of education within said association, to execute notes for sums borrowed and to secure the same by mortgage or deed of trust.

Sec. 11. That the trustees of said school shall not be individually liable for the debts of said school.

Sec. 12. That it shall be unlawful for any person to manufacture, sell, give or dispose of spiritous, malt, or other intoxicating liquors at or within three miles of said "The Wingate School," and any person violating the provisions of this section shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor.

Sec. 13. That this act shall be in force from and after its ratification.

Ratified the 18th day of February, A. D., 1897.

UNION BAPTIST ASSOCIATION MINUTES 1897

PASTORS

The following lists those who have been pastors of this church with the dates of their service:

Rev. John Bennett	1810-?
Rev. Joseph Williams	1810-d. 1825

The minutes from 1810 to 1835 had no record of other pastors except, possibly, Thomas Mason and John Pleason.

(Records very dim.)

Rev. Joel Gulledge	1836-1838
Rev. John Culpepper	1838-1840
Rev. William A. Morris	1840-1842
Rev. J. F. Lee	1842-1846
Rev. E. C. Williams	1846-1856

The Rev. E. L. Davis served the forty years from 1856-1896. He had the following assistants for four periods during that time:

Rev. Lemuel Bennett	1864-1866
Rev. J. J. Beasley	1885-1886
Rev. J. A. Bivens	1888-1892
Rev. J. B. Richardson	1892-1896

Those who have served from 1896 to the present are:

Rev. J. B. Richardson	1896-1899
Rev. J. S. Snyder	May-Nov., 1899
Rev. Thomas Carnick	1899-1902
Rev. G. O. Wilhoit	1903-1904
Rev. B. S. Funderburk	1905-1907
Rev. W. F. Estridge	part of 1908
Rev. D. M. Austin	1908-1912
Rev. S. N. Watson	1913-1914
Rev. C. J. Black	1914-1919
Rev. A. C. Sherwood	1919-1921
Rev. J. E. Hoyle	1922-1925
Rev. J. M. Arnette (supply)	1926
Rev. Coy Muckle	1926-1930
Rev. W. O. Johnson	1930-1935
Rev. J. A. Snow	1935-1937
Rev. E. C. Kelb	1937-1939
Rev. N. C. Coggins (supply)	1939-1941
Rev. W. C. Link, Jr.	1941-1945
Rev. David K. Shelton	1946-1949
Rev. Walter E. Sanders	1949-1953
Rev. J. Dewey Hobbs	1954-1964
Rev. L. Eugene Walter	1965-1972
Rev. Everette Chapman	1973-1978
Rev. Roy N. Ford, Jr.	1979-

DEACONS

Available records list the following:

Henry Bivens	C. G. Smith	Bernard Helms
Joseph Bennett	W. D. Bivens	Harry Chaney
N. W. Bivens	W. O. Kelly	Bogue Funderburk
John W. Bivens	Jay Helms	L. P. Beck
M. A. Griffin	J. M. Lowery	Ned Helms
Jas. W. Hamilton	C. R. Chaney	C. R. Garrison
E. W. Griffin	J. L. Austin	R. C. Hargette
T. J. Williams	J. J. Perry, Sr.	Tom P. Lowery
T. B. Liles	Sim Williams	S. J. Little

J. K. Bivens
 J. W. Outen
 J. C. McIntyre
 J. C. Williams
 J. C. Ashcraft
 Thomas E. Williams
 John H. Williams
 W. M. Perry
 J. G. Carroll
 J. B. Huff
 D. H. Perry
 R. D. Smith
 C. M. Beach
 John A. Bivens
 R. L. Smith
 Benson Bivens
 Sidney Fletcher
 John Clawson
 Thomas E. Corts
 Jimmy Edwards
 John Fulgham
 Jerry Kirkman
 Coy Maye
 Jerry Surratt
 Max Smith

Tris Williams
 J. B. Gaddy
 J. Blanchard Williams
 Sam Love
 George Burch
 C. C. Burris
 Charlie E. Perry
 John Staton
 Edwin Lowery
 Joe G. Chaney
 Baron Smith
 Herman Moore
 J. B. Spittle
 Jack Perry
 L. L. Helms
 Elaine Kirkman
 Don Perry
 Bill Stover
 Max Thomas
 Carolyn Gaddy
 Harvey Michael
 Tom Williams
 Alice Coleman
 Gladys Lowery
 J. B. Helms

Budd E. Smith
 Walter F. Perry
 T. Earl Williams
 Larry Stewart
 Ralph C. Williams
 J. E. Hogan
 Francis Essic
 Ben Williams
 J. Cliff Williams
 Hal Daniels
 John Lowery
 Cliff Adams
 J. L. Austin, Jr.
 Robert Barnes
 George Gerding
 Charles Ray Williams
 David B. Smith
 Suthern Sims
 Ralph Hargett
 Jerry Thomas
 Jim McCoy
 Frank McGuirt
 Frances Crooke
 Eugene Morgan
 John Mangum

CLERKS

Available records list the following:

E. C. Williams
 J. V. Griffin
 J. W. Benton
 I. I. Morris
 E. H. Griffin
 H. Bivens
 T. E. Williams
 H. C. Moore
 Bright Griffin

M. B. Dry
 Jessie Williams
 Ira Mullis
 R. E. Williams
 L. W. Chaney
 J. W. Snyder
 Mrs. Lee W. Chaney
 M. V. Williams
 R. C. Hargett

Mrs. James I. Orr
 C. E. Perry
 Joe G. Chaney
 Miss Mildred Griffin
 Mrs. R. C. Hargett
 Mrs. John Gaddy
 Miss Etta Faye East
 Mrs. Ann Boone
 Mrs. Helen Helms

SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

Available records list the following:

W. J. T. Maske	J. W. Bivens (25 yrs.)	Charlie Perry
J. Perry	J. B. Outen	Walter Perry
C. Austin	C. B. Ashcraft	F. Bernard Helms
John C. Williams	John A. Bivens	S. J. Little
N. W. Bivens	W. O. Kelly	Don Perry
E. W. Griffin	C. M. Preslar	Sid Fletcher
M. B. Dry	R. C. Hargette	Cliff Adams
		Carolyn Gaddy

ORDAINED BY MEADOW BRANCH-WINGATE BAPTIST CHURCH

E. C. Williams	John Staton
Joseph A. Bivens	Joe Larrimore
O. C. Davis	Robert Kelly
Cecil Perry	C. B. Dunn
L. P. Beck	Max Reese
J. H. Thompson	William Stover
Lonnie Munn	Floyd B. Helms, Jr.
N. S. Joyner	John J. Perry
Floyd Helms	

WINGATE BAPTIST CHURCH
Wingate, North Carolina

GUIDELINES FOR CHURCH OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

In the fall of 1967 the deacons asked their chairman to appoint a committee to prepare guidelines for church officers and committees for the Wingate Baptist Church. The committee was composed of Marian Hume, chairman, Coy Maye, and William L. Stover. John A. Bivens, 1967 chairman of deacons, also worked with the committee.

The report of this committee is attached. The deacons have studied the report and are ready to present it to the church for adoption. Will you please study it before church conference next Sunday April 21?

J. B. Helms, Chairman
Board of Deacons

CHURCH OFFICERS

I. PASTOR

A. Calling a Pastor

1. A pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs.
2. A pulpit committee shall be appointed by the church to seek out a suitable pastor.
3. The calling (or election) of a pastor shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose of which at least one week's public notice shall be given.
4. The recommendation of the pulpit committee will constitute a nomination, although any church member has the privilege of making other nominations.
5. The pulpit committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one man at a time.

6. Election shall be by ballot. An affirmative vote of three-fourths of the ballots cast by the church members present shall be necessary for a choice.
7. The pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is dissolved by a three-fourths affirmative vote of ballots cast by the church membership present.
8. At least thirty day's notice of termination of the pastor-church relationship shall be given unless otherwise mutually agreed.

B. Duties

1. The pastor shall have general oversight of the public services of worship and shall preach at each regular service of the church unless otherwise stated.
2. He shall supervise the general development and promotion of the church.
3. He shall be an *ex officio* member of all committees and boards.
4. He shall serve as moderator for any church conference agreed upon in cooperation with the deacons.
5. He shall administer the ordinances of the church.
6. He shall perform other duties as may be agreed upon in cooperation with the deacons.
7. He shall supervise all employees of the church.

II. MINISTER OF EDUCATION

- A. A minister of education shall be recommended to the church by the deacons for approval. Service by the minister of education shall be continued until such time that the church-minister of education relationship is mutually dissolved.
- B. The minister of education shall
 1. Serve as an assistant to the pastor in planning, promoting, and administering the total church program.
 2. Give particular attention to the development of the educational program of the church.

3. Perform any other duties as may be agreed upon with the pastor and deacons.
4. Work under the direct supervision of the pastor.

III. MUSIC DIRECTOR (Choir Director)

- A. A music director shall be recommended to the church by the deacons for approval. The music director shall serve until the church-music director relationship is mutually dissolved.
- B. The music director shall
 1. Be charged with the responsibility of providing worshipful music for the services.
 2. Have general oversight and direction of the music.
 3. Direct the church choir in practice and public singing.
 4. Work in the total music program of the church in cooperation with assistants, other music directors, and the music committee, subject to the approval of the pastor and the church.
 5. Cooperate with the pastor and other leaders in the selection of suitable music and the devising of appropriate musical programs for all occasions where such services are needed.
 6. Work under the direction of the pastor.

IV. CHURCH SECRETARY

- A. The church secretary shall be recommended by the deacons to the church for approval. The secretary shall serve until the church-church secretary relationship is mutually dissolved.
- B. The church secretary shall
 1. Assist the pastor with all matters pertaining to the records of the church, correspondence, and publications.
 2. Perform any secretarial duties which arise in conjunction with the church program.

- 3. Serve as receptionist in the church office during regularly stated hours of work.**
- 4. Serve as financial secretary.**

As financial secretary, the secretary will

- a. Receive the empty collection envelopes after the money has been removed and counted by the proper persons.**
 - b. Give each donor individual credit as provided in the record system used by the church. The envelopes should be kept for a period of at least three years for reference.**
 - c. Prepare and mail quarterly statements to members.**
 - d. Have no responsibility for keeping any money of the church.**
 - e. Keep an accurate record in a suitable book of all totals received through any channel of the church offering and will also credit each object in the accepted budget with its quota of percentage of the receipts. An accurate account of all designated funds will also be kept.**
 - f. Write all checks for payment of accounts and see to it that each of the several objects keeps within its allotted amount. The financial secretary will cosign with the treasurer all checks. An accurate record of disbursements will be kept.**
 - g. Assist the treasurer in the preparation of an itemized report of receipts and disbursements for each month and for the fiscal year.**
- 5. Perform other related duties as may be agreed upon or directed by the pastor in cooperation with the deacons and congregation.**

V. ORGANIST

- A. A nomination for organist shall be approved by the deacons before presentation to the church for approval. The organist shall serve until such time as the church-organist relationship is mutually dissolved.**
- B. The organist shall play for the worship service, funerals, and other services as required. The organist will also rehearse with the church choir.**

VI. PIANIST

- A. The church pianist shall be elected by the church to serve until such time as the church-pianist relationship shall be mutually dissolved.**
- B. The church pianist will play for the evening worship service and other services as needed.**

The Board of Deacons recommends the following amendment to the By-Laws of the Wingate Baptist Church:

In case a vacancy occurs on the Board of Deacons, the procedure will be as follows:

- (1) If the unexpired term has six months or less remaining, the vacancy will not be filled.**
- (2) If the unexpired term has more than six months remaining, the church will fill the vacancy by a special election in which each church member may place in nomination one person. The three candidates with the highest number of votes will be placed on the ballot the following Sunday; the church will elect one of these three.**
- (3) If the unexpired term has two years or less remaining, the person elected will be eligible for immediate re-election.**

This amendment replaces *Article VII, Item 5, Board of Deacons*, which reads as follows:

In case of death, removal, or incapacity to serve, the church may elect to fill the unexpired term.

VII. BOARD OF DEACONS

A. Qualification, Number, Election, Term of Service

- 1. Any member of the church who is eighteen years of age or older may be eligible to serve as a deacon. It shall be pertinent for the church to promote to honorary life membership any deacon who by reason of age of infirmities shall, after honorable service, be no longer able to render active service.**
- 2. The Board of Deacons shall consist of twelve members.**
- 3. The deacons shall be elected at a church conference, with balloting on the first two Sundays in November. During the week preceding the election, each church member will be furnished a list of those eligible to be deacons. Every member of the church shall have one vote for each vacancy. Without nomination, on the first Sunday in November, secret ballots shall be cast for four persons as deacons. The eight receiving the highest number of votes shall be contacted by the pastor and those giving an affirmative reply will be declared as nominees for deacon. In case any one of the eight declines to be a nominee, the pastor shall have the authority to contact the one receiving the next highest vote. In case of a tie for eighth place, all names tied for the eighth place shall be submitted as nominees on the second Sunday in November.
The church shall vote by secret ballot for the deacons on the second Sunday in November. The four receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected for a term of service for three years. If a tie occurs for the fourth place, then a vote shall be taken on the third Sunday of November of those tied for fourth place. The one receiving the highest vote shall be declared elected as the fourth deacon.**
- 4. The term of office of one-third of the number of deacons will expire each year, and election shall be held to fill the vacancies. After serving three years, no deacon shall be eligible for re-election until the lapse of at least one year.**

5. In case of death, removal, or incapacity to serve, the church may elect to fill the unexpired term.

B. Duties

In accordance with the meaning of the word and the practice of the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the church.

1. They are to be zealous to guard the unity of the spirit within the church in the bonds of peace.
2. They shall serve as a council of advice and conference with the pastor in all matters pertaining to the welfare and work of the church. With the pastor they are to consider and formulate plans for the constant effort and progress of the church in all things pertaining to the saving of souls, the development of Christians, and the extension and growth of the kingdom of God.
3. By proper organization and method among themselves, they are to establish and maintain personal fraternal relations with, and inspiring oversight of, all the membership of the church. Especially are they to seek to know the physical needs and the moral and spiritual struggles of the members; and to serve the whole church in relieving, encouraging, and developing all who are in need.
4. The deacons shall serve as a budget-finance committee. They shall organize themselves as they deem best for this part of their work, calling to their assistance other members of the church as they see fit. The duties of this committee are listed under budget-finance committee.
5. The deacons will serve as the building and grounds committee. (See Building and Grounds Committee.)

C. Meetings

1. A regular meeting of the Board of Deacons shall be held at a time and place decided mutually by the deacons and pastor.
2. The Board may, upon proper notice, meet at any other time the affairs of the church may require such a meeting.
3. The Board of Deacons shall be organized as a unit for

carrying out the duties previously stated. They may organize themselves into such committees as their wisdom may direct for efficiency in service.

4. They shall elect their chairman from among the board members at the first regular meeting in each calendar year.
5. A majority of the deacons shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the board.

VIII. MODERATOR

- A. The pastor shall be moderator.
- B. In the absence of the pastor, the chairman of the deacons shall preside.
- C. In the absence of both, the clerk shall call the church to order and a moderator *pro tem* shall be elected.

IX. CLERK

- A. The clerk shall be elected annually by the church.
- B. The clerk shall
 1. Be responsible for seeing that a correct roster of the membership with dates of admission, dismissal, removal, deaths, together with a record of baptisms, is kept.
 2. Keep in a suitable book an up-to-date and accurate record of all the actions and proceedings of all church conferences. Minutes of prior meetings shall be available during such church conferences as called for.
 3. See that letters of dismissal voted by the church are issued.
 4. See that requests for letters are made for persons joining the church by letter.
 5. Preserve on file communications and written official reports.

6. Assist as needed in compiling the annual records of the church for the letter to the Association.
7. Perform other duties and responsibilities as directed by the church.
8. Turn over all records to the church when the tenure of the office ceases. These records shall be permanent records of the church.

X. TREASURER

A. The treasurer shall be elected annually by the church.

B. The treasurer shall

1. Receive, deposit, and disburse all money, or things of value paid or given to the church, seeing that at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements is kept in books especially provided for this purpose.
2. Pay all accounts consistent with the budget of the church.
3. See that bills for local work and expenses are paid promptly by check and all funds received for denominational or other causes are remitted at least monthly by check.
4. Cosign with the church secretary (financial secretary) all checks issued in the name of the church.
5. Render to the deacons at each regular monthly meeting an itemized report of receipts and disbursements for the preceding month.
6. Give the monthly treasurer's report in the regular church conference.
7. Render within thirty days after the end of each fiscal year an annual report in such a manner that the officers and members shall have accurate information as to the financial status of the church at all times.
8. Consider all books, records, and accounts kept by him as the property of the church.
9. Upon the election of a successor, at the completion of his annual report, promptly deliver to his successor all books,

records, and accounts in his hands pertaining or relating in any manner to the duties of the office he is relinquishing.

10. Keep the treasurer's books open to review at all times by any member of the church. This does not include the records of gifts by individuals.
11. Consider it a part of his responsibility to promote in every proper way scriptural giving on the part of the entire membership of the church.

XI. USHERS

- A. The nominating committee shall recommend to the church for approval a chairman of ushers and an assistant.
- B. The chairman and assistant chairman shall be responsible for seeing that an adequate number of ushers are available and present for the worship services. Also they shall give direction in the ushering duties.

CHURCH COMMITTEES

All committees except the Budget-Finance Committee, Building and Grounds Committee, and Pulpit Committee shall be elected annually by the church. Recommendations for committee chairmen and members shall be made by the nominating committee.

AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS COMMITTEE

- A. The Audio-Visual Aids Committee shall be composed of at least three members.
- B. This committee shall
 1. Study the equipment needs and recommend the purchase of needed equipment.
 2. Promote the use of both projected and nonprojected visual aids.

3. Establish a system for scheduling the use of equipment, including checking in and out of equipment and supplies.
4. Be responsible for giving instruction in the use and care of the equipment.

BAPTISM COMMITTEE

- A. The Baptism Committee shall be composed of at least six people, with an equal number of men and women.
- B. The duties of the committee shall be
 1. To see that baptismal robes are ready to use when needed and that they are laundered and stored after use.
 2. To make sure that the baptistry is filled and properly heated.
 3. To see that the dressing rooms are ready for use.
 4. To assist in preparing the candidates for baptism and to assist candidates into the pool in the proper order.
 5. To assist candidates from the pool to the dressing rooms and with dressing as needed.

BUDGET-FINANCE COMMITTEE

- A. The Budget-Finance Committee shall be composed of the Board of Deacons or a committee from the deacons.
- B. The duties of the committee shall be
 1. To prepare the annual budget and to present it to the church for adoption no later than the regular church conference in the month preceding a new fiscal year. The church members shall have available for study copies of the proposed budget at least one week before it is presented to the church for approval. Copies of the approved budget shall be made available to all church members.
 2. To approve budget expenditures within the framework of the approved church budget and current financial policies.

3. To recommend to the church for approval expenditure of funds not included in the church's budget.
4. To review expenditures periodically in terms of budget allocations.
5. To review any requests for special offerings not already approved by the church.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE

- A. The Building and Grounds Committee shall be composed of the Board of Deacons or a committee from the Deacons. They may call to their assistance other members of the church as they see fit.
- B. The duties of the committee shall be
 1. To supervise the care and upkeep (inspect, develop, and recommend a program of preventive maintenance, and initiate repairs) of all of the church properties, including the church building, grounds, and pastor's home.
 2. To present to the church for approval any action requiring expenditures not approved in the budget.
 3. To have general oversight of the work of the custodian.

CHURCH ROLL COMMITTEE

- A. The Church Roll Committee shall be composed of five members.
- B. The committee shall be responsible for reviewing the church roll and seeing that it is kept up-to-date. They shall meet at least annually.

HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE

- A. The Hospitality Committee shall be composed of six members, including at least four men.
- B. This committee shall be responsible for having someone present at each entrance to greet the people for all worship services, funerals, and other meetings as needed.

- C. The church office shall be responsible for notifying the chairman when funerals and other meetings are to be held at the church.**

KITCHEN-SOCIAL COMMITTEE

- A. The Kitchen-Social Committee shall be composed of at least three members.**
- B. In performing its responsibilities, the committee may enlist whatever help is needed.**
- C. The committee shall**
 - 1. Give general oversight in the use of the kitchen facilities by any group.**
 - 2. Schedule the use of the kitchen facilities in cooperation with the church office, in accordance with the policies of the church.**
 - 3. See that the kitchen is kept adequately equipped and that an up-to-date inventory is available.**
 - 4. Be responsible for the use or removal of kitchen equipment from the church premises.**
 - 5. Supervise the preparations of any meals or socials.**

LIBRARY COMMITTEE

- A. The Library Committee shall be composed of at least six members.**
- B. This committee shall**
 - 1. Determine and establish library policies, rules, and regulations which shall determine the use of the library.**
 - 2. Give general oversight to the library, properly accessioning and cataloguing new books, magazines, records, and visual aids and keeping an accurate record of the circulation of books.**
 - 3. Guide the promotional program of the library in general areas of publicity.**
 - 4. Be responsible for selecting and ordering books and mate-**

rials for the library in accordance with the needs of the church.

5. Be available to assist in the selection of books to be given as memorials or in honor of some person.

LORD'S SUPPER COMMITTEE

- A. The Lord's Supper Committee shall be composed of at least six members.
- B. This committee shall
 1. Study the equipment needs and recommend the purchase of the needed service equipment.
 2. Obtain and prepare the elements used in the Lord's Supper.
 3. Prepare the table for the Lord's Supper observance.
 4. Arrange for the service equipment and linens to be cleaned and stored after the service.

MUSIC COMMITTEE

- A. The Music Committee shall be composed of three members. In addition, the music director (choir director), assistant music director, organist, and pianist shall be *ex officio* members.
- B. They shall be responsible for the total music program and for the music instruments and supplies.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

- A. The Nominating Committee shall be composed of at least five members. In addition, the heads of the church organizations for the ensuing years, after being elected by the church, shall be *ex officio* members of this committee. The five elected members shall not succeed themselves on this committee.
- B. The committee shall
 1. Select, interview, and enlist the church program organiza-

tion leaders, church committee chairmen and members who are elected annually by the church, and general church officers.

2. Present its recommendations to the church for approval at the regular monthly church conference preceding the month in which those recommended will begin serving.

NURSERY SCHOOL—KINDERGARTEN COMMITTEE

- A. The Nursery School—Kindergarten Committee shall be composed of a minimum of five members who have an intense interest in, and love for, young children. They should have a working knowledge of preschool or primary education.
- B. The work of the committee shall include
 1. Making reports, at least quarterly, to the church concerning enrollment, finances, and other pertinent information.
 2. Selecting the kindergarten director, the nursery school director, and the assistants for both the kindergarten and the nursery school. These selections for personnel shall be submitted to the church for approval.
 3. Assisting the directors in adding new equipment.
 4. Working with the directors in planning the kindergarten and the nursery school budgets.
 5. Working with the directors in reviewing the kindergarten and the nursery school policies.

PULPIT COMMITTEE

- A. A Pulpit Committee shall be appointed whenever a vacancy in the pulpit occurs. The deacons shall recommend a committee to the church for approval.
- B. This committee shall seek out a suitable pastor, bringing only one man at a time to the church for consideration.

REPRESENTATIVES TO THE COMMUNITY RECREATION COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee shall nominate at least six persons who shall represent the church on the Community Recreation Committee.

TRUSTEES

- A. There shall be four trustees.**
- B. The trustees shall**
 - 1. Sign and hold in trust any deed, mortgage, bond, or contract after being duly authorized by the vote of the congregation.**
 - 2. Serve as the legal representatives in any other legal action concerning the church which may arise.**

NURSERY-KINDERGARTEN COMMITTEE

By action of the Wingate Baptist Church, in conference on Sunday morning, March 12, 1972, the following change was made in the Guidelines of the Church:

“The Deacon Board shall appoint a Nursery-Kindergarten Committee to be made up of two members of the Deacon Board, and three members of the church at large and that the Committee would be answerable to the Deacon Board, who in turn would be answerable to the Church.

ADMENDMENT, Church Conference July 9, 1972

Section B, Item 2, shall be changed to read as follows:

- 2. Selecting the Nursery Director and the assistants of the Day Care Center. These selections for personnel shall be submitted to the church for approval.**

and thereafter, use the word “Director” in place of the word “Directors.”

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

Wingate Baptist Church Wingate, North Carolina

September 1981

C O N S T I T U T I O N

ARTICLE I NAME

The name of this church shall be the Wingate Baptist Church of Wingate, North Carolina.

ARTICLE II PURPOSE

The purpose of this church shall be to uphold and provide opportunities for public worship; to promote Christian fellowship, service and growth among its members; to nurture its members through a program of Christian education; and to proclaim the Gospel of the revelation of God through Jesus Christ through evangelism and missionary outreach.

ARTICLE III COVENANT

- ... To honor God with our lives, seeking first his kingdom and his righteousness, supporting the total mission of our church with our prayers, time, abilities and money.**
- ... To live as disciples, seeking ever to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.**
- ... To attend and support the worship of this church, its ordinances, discipline and doctrine.**
- ... To labor together in Christian fellowship, exercising brotherly love toward one another, praying for each other, being mindful of and sharing one another's joys, burdens and sorrows, and always being slow to take offense and eager for reconciliation.**

- ... To live as Christians in the world, being just in our dealings and faithful in our obligations.
- ... To regard as of the household of faith all who worship Christ as Lord, and while holding to our Baptist convictions and heritage, seeking with all Christians a unity of spirit and purpose.
- ... To live as Christians in our homes, engaging in family and individual devotions, teaching our children by instruction and example that Christ is Saviour and Lord.
- ... To endeavor by example and effort to win others to faith in and commitment to Christ.
- ... To become active members of another church when circumstances require our separation from this one.

ARTICLE IV STATEMENT OF FAITH

Since the Wingate Baptist Church does not endorse a creed, the church accepts as an informational statement the Articles of Faith endorsed by the Southern Baptist Convention in May, 1963, and recorded in *The Baptist Faith and Message*.

ARTICLE V RELATIONSHIPS

The government of this church is vested in the body of Christian believers. It recognizes the obligation of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptist churches. This church shall seek to cooperate with the programs of the Union Baptist Association, the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

ARTICLE VI ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS

- Section 1.** This Constitution shall be considered in effect when approved by two-thirds of the members present and voting at a regularly scheduled business meeting provided that the Constitution was provided in writing at least thirty (30) days prior to the time when the vote is taken.
- Section 2.** This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at any regular business meeting of the church provided that such amendment is read

at a previous business meeting and provided in writing to all members of the church present and entitled to vote.

Section 3. All previous church action contrary to the provision of this Constitution is hereby rescinded.

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. *Eligibility for Membership*

Anyone professing faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, and adopting the views of faith and practice held by this church, together with its covenant and constitution, may be received into membership in this church.

Section 2. *Candidate*

A person may offer himself (herself) as a candidate for membership in this church by one of the following ways:

- A. By profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and for baptism by immersion.
- B. By promise of a letter from another Baptist church.
- C. By promise of a letter from another Christian church providing that membership in that church required profession of faith and baptism in some form.
- D. By statement of prior conversion experience when a letter is not obtainable.
- E. By spiritual Watchcare. Persons who are temporary residents in the area of this church may come under the spiritual watchcare of this church, but they shall not vote in church business conference, serve on the Diaconate, or represent the church in other assemblies.

Section 3. *Procedure for Membership*

- A. A person may present himself (herself) for membership during regularly scheduled or special worship services of this church and be admitted into full membership when they have fulfilled the other membership requirements of this Constitution.
- B. New members will participate in new member orientation class or classes.

Section 4. *Duties of Members*

The duty of the members of this church shall be to obey their covenant vows.

Section 5. *Inactive and Non-resident Members*

- A. An inactive member is a member who does not participate in any way in the church for two (2) years.
- B. A non-resident member is a member who does not live in Union County and who does not participate in any way in the life of the church for two (2) years.
- C. The inactive and non-resident member will be notified of their status, and their names will be kept on an inactive roll for future reference. Their names will be returned to the active membership roll when they resume their active status.

Section 6. *Termination of Membership*

Methods of terminating membership shall be as follows:

- A. A letter to unite with another Christian church may be issued, upon request, to another Christian church for any member of this church who is in good standing. All such applications must be passed upon by the church to which transfer is requested.
- B. When a member dies or requests that his name be removed.

ARTICLE II CHURCH OFFICERS

Section 1. *Pastor*

The Pastor shall be an ordained Baptist minister. He shall be called by the church upon the recommendation of the Pastor Selection Committee to serve until this relationship is dissolved by either the Pastor or the church. His election shall be by secret ballot and shall take place at a meeting called for this purpose, with at least one week's notice given to the congregation. A three-fourths ($\frac{3}{4}$) vote of those present and voting at the meeting shall constitute a call.

The relationship may be terminated by the Pastor's resignation or by the majority vote of the members present and

voting at a called business meeting of the church after due notice of the purpose of such a meeting has been given to the congregation. In either case, thirty days notice of the termination shall be required.

The Pastor shall be the spiritual leader of the church. He shall lead the church as it carries out its purpose and work with the church officers and committees as they accomplish their tasks. He will be an *ex officio* member of all committees. He shall serve as moderator for all church conferences, and lead the deacons as they assist in the performance of the pastoral responsibilities. He shall direct and coordinate the work of the ministers and all employees of the church. He is responsible for the worship services and administering of the ordinances, and he shall serve in whatever ways he and the church mutually agree to be in the best interests of Christ's kingdom. In summary, the Pastor applies his talents as best he can with God's help to lead the church in accomplishing its work.

Section 2. *Ministers*

The Church shall call ministers as needed to carry out its purpose. These ministers shall be recommended to the church by the committee of the church responsible for that particular area of the church's ministry. A detailed job description shall be prepared for each position prior to the call and shall be agreed upon by the nominee and the committee, and a general description of the position shall be presented to the church at the time of nomination.

The election and termination procedures described for the Pastor shall also apply to the ministers.

The ministers shall be responsible to the church for the activities in their respective areas, but they shall work under the direction of the Pastor and in cooperation with the appropriate church committee.

Section 3. *Church Secretary*

The Church Secretary shall be recommended by the Personnel Committee to the church for approval and shall serve until the Church/Church Secretary relationship is mutually dissolved.

Duties

- A. Record, in permanent form, the transactions of the church business and maintain a complete set of reports and minutes which shall be available in the office of the Church Secretary.
- B. Request letters from other churches for persons who unite with this church on promise of letter, provide letters of transfer when requested for members, notify church members of actions taken in the business meetings and inform all officers, members of committees and messengers of their election or appointment.
- C. Prepare the annual letter to the Association which reports the membership, finances, and activities of the church.
- D. Maintain an accurate roll of the church membership.
- E. Deposit Day Care receipts, handle disbursements, and accounting records.
- F. Receive a summary of receipts from the Treasurer and file a record of individual contributions.
- G. Post individual records and provide each contributor with his record.

Section 4. *Diaconate*

- A. Qualification, Number, Election, Term of Service
 - (1) Any member of the church who is eighteen years of age or older may be eligible to serve as a deacon. The church may promote to honorary life membership any deacon who by reason of age or infirmities shall, after honorable service, be no longer able to render active service.
 - (2) The Diaconate shall consist of fifteen members.
 - (3) The deacons shall be elected at a church conference, with balloting on the first two Sundays in November. During the week preceding the election, each church member will be furnished a list of those eligible to be deacons. Every member of the church shall have one vote for each vacancy. Without nomination, on the

first Sunday in November, secret ballots shall be cast for five persons as deacons. The ten receiving the highest number of votes shall be contacted by the pastor and those giving an affirmative reply will be declared as nominees for deacon. In case any one of the ten declines to be a nominee, the pastor shall have the authority to contact the one receiving the next highest vote. In case of a tie for tenth place, all names tied for the tenth place shall be submitted as nominees on the second Sunday in November.

The church shall vote by secret ballot for the deacons on the second Sunday in November. The five receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected for a term of service for three years. If a tie occurs for the fifth place, then a vote shall be taken on the third Sunday in November of those tied for fifth place. The one receiving the highest vote shall be declared elected as the fifth deacon.

- (4) The term of office of one-third of the number of deacons will expire each year, and the election shall be held to fill the vacancies. After serving three years, no deacon shall be eligible for re-election until the lapse of at least one year.
- (5) In case of death, removal, or incapacity to serve when there is more than six months, the church will fill the vacancy by a special election.

B. Duties

In accordance with the meaning of the word and the practice of the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the church.

- (1) They are to be zealous to guard the unity of the spirit within the church in the bonds of peace.
- (2) They shall serve as a council of advice and conference with the pastor in all matters pertaining to the welfare and work of the church. With the pastor they are to consider and formulate plans for the constant effort and progress of the church in all things pertaining to the saving of souls, the develop-

ment of Christians, and the extension and growth of the kingdom of God.

- (3) By proper organization and method among themselves, they are to establish and maintain personal fraternal relations with, and inspiring oversight of, all the membership of the church. Especially are they to seek to know the physical needs and the moral and spiritual struggles of the members; and to serve the whole church in relieving, encouraging, and developing all who are in need.

C. Meetings

- (1) A regular meeting of the Diaconate shall be held at a time and place decided mutually by the deacons and pastor.
- (2) The Diaconate may, upon proper notice, meet at any other time the affairs of the church may require such a meeting.
- (3) The Diaconate shall be organized as a unit for carrying out the duties previously stated. They may organize themselves into such committees as their wisdom may direct for efficiency in service.
- (4) They shall elect their chairman from among the board members at the first regular meeting in each calendar year.
- (5) A majority of the deacons shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the board.

Section 5. *Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer*

The Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer shall be elected annually. The Treasurer shall be an *ex officio* member of the Finance Committee.

Duties

- A. Receive and verify the summary of receipts and bank deposit slips.
- B. Disburse funds after receiving properly signed supporting documents. These documents may be authorized by

either the Pastor or the Chairman of the Finance Committee.

- C. Reconcile monthly bank statements and prepare quarterly and annual statements of receipts and disbursements, and a balance sheet, which are presented to the Finance Committee and to the church.

Section 6. *Trustees*

- A. There shall be three Trustees to hold in trust the title of all real property of the church and represent the church in all legal matters where any process of law is required. In these matters the Trustees are to act only as directed by a majority of the church in a business meeting.
- B. At least annually, the Trustees will review all aspects of the property and liability insurance program of the church, determine needs, and obtain the necessary coverage. All policies and records relating to this insurance will be retained and maintained by the Trustees.
- C. The term of office of one-third of the number of Trustees will expire each year, and election shall be held to fill the vacancies. After serving three years, no Trustee shall be eligible for re-election until the lapse of at least one year.

ARTICLE III STANDING COMMITTEES

Section 1. *General*

All church committee members and special committees shall be recommended by the Nominating Committee and elected by the church unless otherwise stated in the description below. Committees shall elect their own chairman, vice-chairman and secretary at their first regular meeting.

Acceptance by a church member of election to a committee implies an intention to be active in the work of that committee. Each committee shall obtain an adequate knowledge of appropriate procedure in its field of service, promptly and faithfully discharge its duties, meet regularly (at least once a quarter) for business and fellowship, request financial allocations through the Finance Committee and supervise the expenditure of allotted funds.

Section 2. *Standing Committees*

BAPTISM COMMITTEE

- A. The Baptism Committee shall be composed of at least six persons with an equal number of men and women.**
- B. Duties**
 - (1) Supervise the maintenance of baptismal garments, laundering, storing, and replacing garments.**
 - (2) Supervise the preparation for the service; filling baptismal pool, and heating the water.**
 - (3) Assist in preparing candidates for baptism and helping the candidate into the pool and from the pool.**

CHURCH COUNCIL

- A. The primary functions of the Council shall be to recommend to the congregation suggested church goals; to review and coordinate program plans recommended by church officers, organizations, and committees; to recommend to the congregation the use of leadership, calendar time, and other resources according to program priorities; and to evaluate program achievements in terms of church goals and objectives.**
- B. The Council shall have as regular members: the Pastor, Minister of Music, Sunday School Director, Woman's Missionary Union Director, Chairman of Deacons, and President of the Sixty-Plus Group. Committee chairmen and church-elected officers shall serve as *ex officio* members.**

COMMUNION COMMITTEE

- A. The Committee shall be composed of eight members.**
- B. Duties**
 - (1) Supervise the care, maintenance, and provision of the Lord's Supper trays, cups, plates, and cloths to be used, and recommend any additions to the equipment as it becomes necessary.**
 - (2) Prepare or secure the elements to be used for the Lord's Supper and place them in the sanctuary.**

- (3) See that the trays, plates, cups and cloths are cleaned after they are used.

DAY CARE COMMITTEE

- A. The Committee shall be composed of six members with at least one being a deacon.

- B. Duties

- (1) Select and present to the church for approval all Day Care personnel.
- (2) Assist the Director in the purchase of new equipment.
- (3) Work with the Day Care Director in planning the Day Care's budget.
- (4) Work with the Day Care Director in reviewing the Day Care's policies, programs and fees.

- C. Term

The Committee members shall serve a term of three years with one-third to be elected each year. After serving a term of three years, a committee member will be eligible for re-election only after the lapse of one year.

KITCHEN-SOCIAL COMMITTEE

- A. The Committee shall be composed of six members.

- B. Duties

- (1) Establish and administer general policies concerning the operation of the kitchen and dining room.
- (2) See that the kitchen is equipped with the necessary utensils and expendable supplies.
- (3) Serve as official host or hostess at all church-sponsored dinners, socials, receptions, and special celebrations.

LIBRARY COMMITTEE

- A. The Committee shall be composed of at least six members.

- B. Duties

- (1) Determine and establish library policies, rules, and

regulations which shall determine the use of the library.

- (2) Give general oversight to the library, properly accessioning and cataloging new books, magazines, records, and visual aids and keeping an accurate record of the circulation of books.
- (3) Guide the promotional program of the library in general areas of publicity.
- (4) Be responsible for selecting and ordering books and materials for the library in accordance with the needs of the church.
- (5) Be available to assist in the selection of books to be given as memorials or in honor of some person.

MISSION AND EVANGELISM COMMITTEE

A. The Committee shall be composed of five members including the Mission Action Chairman of the W.M.U.

B. Duties

- (1) Study local mission needs and recommend plans to the church for meeting the needs found.
- (2) Work with program organizations within the church on mission activities that they perform for the church.
- (3) Seek ways to encourage church members to reach unchurched people in the community.
- (4) Work with pastor in planning evangelistic and mission activities.

MUSIC COMMITTEE

A. The Committee shall be composed of six members with the Minister of Music and Organist as *ex officio* members.

B. Duties

- (1) Assist the pastor and program organization leaders in planning musical activities.
- (2) Recommend the purchase of any additional or replacement musical instruments.

- (3) Maintain a roster of prospective song leaders, pianists and other music leaders for use in the church.
- (4) Establish and enforce a policy for use of the musical instruments.

C. Term

The Committee members shall serve a term of three years with one-third to be elected each year. After serving a term of three years, a committee member will be eligible for re-election only after the lapse of one year.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

A. The Committee shall be composed of six members.

B. Duties

- (1) Nominate annually the Director of the Sunday School and Vacation Bible School.
- (2) Work closely with the program organization directors to insure that all positions are filled and secure replacements when vacancies occur.
- (3) Nominate all departmental directors and Sunday School teachers. These begin service October 1.
- (4) Nominate all committee members and appropriate officers. These begin service January 1.
- (5) Maintain an up-to-date roster of opportunities to serve in the church.

C. Term

The Committee members shall serve a term of three years with one-third to be elected each year. After serving a term of three years, a committee member will be eligible for re-election only after the lapse of one year.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

A. The Committee shall be composed of six members.

B. Duties

- (1) Develop policies for staff organization, employment practices, salaries and benefits.
- (2) Review needs for new positions and make appropriate recommendations to the church.

- (3) Prepare an organizational chart with job descriptions and supervisory responsibilities for each staff position.
- (4) Recruit, interview, and recommend the employment of all personnel, except pastor and Day Care Staff.
- (5) Review annually the salaries and fringe benefits and make recommendation to Stewardship Committee.

C. Term

The Committee members shall serve a term of three years with one-third to be elected each year. After serving a term of three years, a committee member will be eligible for re-election only after a lapse of one year.

SANCTUARY COMMITTEE

A. The Committee shall be composed of three members.

B. Duties

- (1) Coordinate the furnishings for the sanctuary.
- (2) Provide flowers for regular church services and for special occasions when the entire church is involved; revivals, associational meetings, etc.
- (3) Plan and provide special seasonal (Christmas, Easter, etc.) decorations for the church.

STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

A. This Committee shall be composed of three regular members with the chairman coming from the regular members. The Chairman of Deacons, Sunday School Director and W.M.U. Director, Chairman of the Properties Committee, Chairman of the Personnel Committee and Church Treasurer shall be *ex officio* members.

B. Duties

- (1) Receive and evaluate budget requests.
- (2) Prepare and present the annual budget to the church.
- (3) Direct the stewardship emphasis and organize the Budget Subscription Campaign for each year.

- (4) Supervise non-emergency purchases and require bids when such purchases exceed \$1,000.
- (5) Organize a group of people to count receipts for all services, with at least 2 persons present.
- (6) Serve as consultants on church finances, develop policies concerning expenditures not in the budget.
- (7) Select an auditor for the church each year.

C. Term

The Committee members shall serve a term of three years with one-third to be elected each year. After serving a term of three years, a committee member will be eligible for re-election only after the lapse of one year.

USHER COMMITTEE

A. This Committee shall be composed of three members.

B. Duties

- (1) Organize an adequate group of ushers for the Sunday worship service.
- (2) Develop suggestions for the ushers and inform them as to:
 - a. How to greet people before the service.
 - b. When and how to seat people.
 - c. How to collect the offering.
 - d. Where and when to report to duty.
- (3) Plan ushers for special meetings; e.g., revivals, funerals, etc.
- (4) Develop a plan for contacting an usher for his Sunday of service.
- (5) Assume the responsibility for receiving the offering.

PASTOR SELECTION COMMITTEE

A. This Committee shall exist only when there is a vacancy in the position of pastor and shall serve until a pastor is called or until relieved of its duties by the church. The Committee shall consist of five persons representative of the membership of the church.

B. Duties

To seek out a suitable person for the position of pastor and recommend that person to the church. Any member may recommend a person for consideration by the committee. The committee will bring only one person for consideration by the church at a time. Election shall require an affirmative vote of three-fourths of the number present and voting.

ARTICLE IV PROGRAM ORGANIZATIONS

Section 1. *General*

All organizations of the church shall be under church control, all officers being elected by the church and reporting regularly to the church.

Section 2. *Sunday School*

There shall be a Sunday School, divided into divisions, departments and classes for all ages and conducted under the direction of the Sunday School Director for the study of God's Word.

The tasks of the Sunday School shall be to teach the biblical revelation, reach persons for Christ and church membership, perform the functions of the church within its constituency, provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination.

Section 3. *Woman's Missionary Union*

There shall be a Woman's Missionary Union with such officers and organizations as needed. The tasks of the Woman's Missionary Union shall be to teach missions, engage in mission action, support world missions through prayer and giving, provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination.

Section 4. *Church Music Program*

There shall be a Church Music Program under the direction of the Minister of Music. Such officers and/or organizations shall be included as needed. The music tasks shall be to teach music, train persons to lead, sing, and play music; provide music in the church and community; provide and

interpret information regarding the music work of the church and denomination.

ARTICLE V ORDINANCES

Section 1. *Baptism*

A person who receives Jesus Christ as Saviour by personal faith; who professes Him publicly as any worship service; and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord, shall be received for baptism.

- A. Baptism shall be by immersion in water except where disability prohibits immersion. In the case of disability, some other feasible method may be used.
- B. Baptism shall be administered by the pastor or whomever the church shall authorize. (The Baptism Committee shall assist in the preparation for, and observance of, baptism.)
- C. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service.
- D. A person professing Christ and failing to be baptized after a reasonable length of time shall be counseled by the pastor and/or staff and deacons. If negative interest is ascertained, he shall be deleted from those awaiting baptism.

Section 2. *The Lord's Supper*

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and fruit of the vine, commemorate the death of Jesus Christ and anticipate his second coming.

- A. The Lord's Supper shall be observed regularly, preferably the first Sunday of the month, or as otherwise scheduled.
- B. The Lord's Supper shall be observed during the morning worship service, or as otherwise scheduled.
- C. The pastor and deacons shall be responsible for the administration of the Lord's Supper.
- D. The Communion Committee shall be responsible for the physical preparations of the Lord's Supper.

ARTICLE VII ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS

- Section 1.** These By-laws shall be considered in effect when approved by a majority of the members present and voting at a regularly scheduled business meeting provided that these By-laws were provided in writing at least 30 days prior to the time when the vote is taken.
- Section 2.** These By-laws may be amended by a majority vote of the members present and voting at any regular business meeting of the church provided that such amendment is read at a previous business meeting and provided in writing to all members of the church present and entitled to vote.
- Section 3.** All previous church action contrary to the provisions of these By-laws is hereby rescinded.

WINGATE BAPTIST CHURCH

Wingate, North Carolina

1984

DEACONS

1984

Carolyn Gaddy
William Stover
Jim McCoy
Frank McGuirt
Walter Perry

1985

Harry Chaney
Frances Crooke
Jim Edwards
Gladys Hinson
Coy Maye

1986

John Clawson
Alice Coleman
Jerry Kirkman
Harvey Michael
Gene Morgan

RESIDENT MEMBERS

Cliff Z. Adams
Karen Adams
Clayton Allen
Kate D. Allen
William E. Allen

Annie Austin
Katie Lee Austin
Virginia Austin
Mary Lee Austin
Pearl D. Austin

Phil Austin
Elaine Austin
Andrea Austin
Phillip Austin
Olive Austin

Maude Autry
 Tom Autry
 Edwin Bagley
 Cheryl Bagley
 Mary Lee Baker
 Florence Barr
 Dennis Belk
 Mike Belk
 Scarlett Belk
 Angela Bell
 Gregory Bell
 Jeffrey Bell
 Benson Bivens
 Corinna Bivens
 Carlton Bivens
 Lucille Bivens
 Charles Bivens, Sr.
 Eula Ross Bivens
 Charles Bivens, Jr.
 John A. Bivens
 Evelyn P. Bivens
 Homer Boone
 Rosalie Boone
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 Carol Finch Boyd
 Bill G. Braswell, Sr.
 Martha Braswell
 Bill G. Braswell, Jr.
 Johnny Braswell
 Doris Braswell
 John Mark Braswell
 Lori Braswell
 Frances Braswell
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 Alice Brooks
 Leanna Brooks
 Ruth Broome
 Tommy Broome

J. V. Burns
 Gladys Burns
 Alan Burns
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 Diane Carter
 James H. Cauble
 LaRue Cauble
 Polly Cauble
 Ruby Caudle
 Eunice Chaney
 Harry Chaney
 Vann Chaney
 Martha Chaney
 Andora Chaney
 Margie Chaney
 Mildred Chapman
 Phil Chapman
 Ronald Christopher
 Beverly Christopher
 Drew Christopher
 Wendy Christopher
 John Clawson
 Adelaide Clawson
 Phyllis Clawson
 John H. Clawson
 Mattie Cobb
 Byrns Coleman
 Alice Coleman
 Allen Coleman
 Bill Coleman
 Jo Coleman
 Edison Collins
 Bill Connell
 Peggy Connell
 Kevin Connell
 Margaret Ruth Courtney
 Helen Cowser
 John A. Cox
 Jane Cox

David Cox
 Billy Cox
 Tom Crooke, Sr.
 Frances Crooke
 Tom Crooke, Jr.
 John Crooke
 Everett Cuthbertson
 Regina Cuthbertson
 Hal Daniels
 Grace Daniels
 John Daniels
 John Davis
 Angie Davis
 Joni Davis
 William J. D. Deese
 Robert Doak
 Darlene Doak
 Dale Dupree
 Laraine Dupree
 Kim Dupree
 Tommy Dupree
 Danny Edwards
 Jimmy Edwards
 JoAnn Edwards
 Todd Edwards
 Joel Edwards
 Janet Edwards
 Phil Edwards
 Anne Edwards
 Shannon Edwards
 Velma Edwards
 Wayne Edwards
 Louise Edwards
 Bright Ellis
 John Eudy
 Louise Eudy
 Mitchell Eudy
 Allie Evans
 Mary Alice Fagg

Joe C. Finch
Lillian Finch
Roger Finch
George Finch
Elsie Finney
Sidney Fletcher
Myzelle Fletcher
James Fletcher
Grace Flowers
Bobby Ford
Agnes Ford
Mike Ford
Debbie Ford
Roy N. Ford, Jr.
June Ford
Joe Forren
Flo Forren
Valerie Forren
Gaye Forren
Bert Forsythe
Brenda Forsythe
Hoyt Freeman
Betty Freeman
Janet Freeman
John Fulgham
Ellen Gaddy
John Gaddy
Lema Gaddy
Carolyn Gaddy
George Gerding
Carolyn Gerding
Glenn Gerding
Melody Gerding
Faye Giles
Claudia Green
Kate Griffin
Mildred Griffin
Mary Griffin
Robert Griffin

Betty Griffin
Jane Griffin
Ann Griffin
James Hall
Shayne Hall
Vera Hancock
Nora Lee Hargette
Ralph Hargett
Ella Hargett
Kim Hargett
Margaret Hargett
Herbert Hasty
K. G. Hasty
Ora Hasty
Bob Hayes
Betty Hayes
Todd Hayes
Raymond Hayes
Lois Hayes
Martha Hayes
Alan Hayes
Bernard Helms
Jessie Mae Helms
Kate B. Helms
Gary Helms
H. Frank Helms
Effie H. Helms
J. Ben Helms
Pearl S. Helms
J. Ned Helms
Helen T. Helms
Beverly Helms
L. L. Helms
Mary Helms
Betty Helms
William H. Helms
Jayne Hill
Judy Hill
Robert Hillock

Lana Hillock
Durrell Hinson
Margaret Hinson
Gregory Hinson
Jacqueline Hinson
Gladys Hinson
J. E. Hogan
Art Holder
Frankie Holder
David Holder
Thelma Huggins
Bill B. Hunnicutt
JoAnn Hunicutt
W. R. Johnson
Edith Johnson
Ed Jones
Frances Jones
Joni Jones
Angela Jones
Emma Karim
Jerry Kirkman
Elaine Kirkman
Bill Kirkman
Jan Kirkman
Tim Kirkman
Nena Laney
Peter Larrimore
Carol Larrimore
Ernest Lee
June Lee
JoAnn Lindsay
Eleanor Little
S. J. Little
Jean Little
Bill Long
Ruth Long
Jill Long
James Long
Vivian Long

Jamie Long
Jackie Long
John W. Lowery
Betty Jo Lowery
Vicki Lowery
John W. Lowery, Jr.
Emily Lowery
Tom P. Lowery
Mildred Lowery
Nancy Lowery
Tom P. Lowery, Jr.
Patti Lowery
R. W. MacDonald
Juanita MacDonald
Irma McAteer
Libby McCarthy
Daisy McCollum
Annie McCollum
Anne H. McConnell
Jim McCoy
Jane McCoy
Frank McGuirt
Jenny McGuirt
Bess McIntyre
Ruby McIntyre
Sidney McIntyre
Jerald McNutt
Brenda McNutt
Janet M. Mackey
John Mangum
Linda Mangum
Doris Mangum
Parks Mangum, Jr.
Ann Mangum
Denise Mangum
Billy Mason
Wm. C. Mason
Marie Mason
Brenda Mason
Selma Matheson

Coy Maye
Jacksie Maye
Ervin Maye
Donna Maye
Roger Maye
Mary Maye
Tony Maye
Joyce Maye
Karmen Maye
Kemp Melton
Mike Melton
Donald Merrill
Pam Merrill
Bill Michael
Harvey Michael
Macie Michael
Chris Michael
Tim Michael
Louise Michael
Mary Ellen Mills
Julian Montero
Lelia Montero
Hermon Moore
Mildred Moore
Danny Morgan
Barbara Morgan
Gene Morgan
Edna Morgan
Laura Muckle
Harry Myers
Jean Myers
Karen Jo Myers
Bobby Myers
Rick Nance
Betty Nance
Eula Nash
Wm. H. Nash
Linda Nash
Sara Orr
Wayne Pace

Denise Pace
Pauline Parker
James W. Parrish
Cathy Parrish
Donald Perry
Edie Perry
Donica Perry
Ollie Perry
John E. Perry
Janell Perry
Todd Perry
Mildred Perry
Richard Perry
Annette Perry
Patti Perry
Paula Perry
Walter F. Perry
Frances Perry
Karen Perry
Jean Pick
Delmer Pierce
Ann Pierce
Wilson Pierce
Joyce Pipes
Lois Potts
John R. Presley
Margie Presson
Margaret Ratliff
Z. G. Ray
Jill Riggins
Ervin Ross
Nancy Ross
Jane Perry Ross
Madeline Rushing
Zondra Rushing
Suzy Setser
Wayne Shadrick
Julia Shadrick
Amy Shadrick
Harry Sherwood

Juel Sherwood
 David Sherwood
 Brian Sherwood
 Nancy Sherwood
 Larry Shoffner
 Polly Shoffner
 David Sims
 Suzanne Sims
 Baron D. Smith
 Bessie Smith
 Andy Smith
 Everett Smith
 Eric Smith
 Robert C. Smith
 Hallie Smith
 Stephen Smith
 Kay Smith
 David G. Stegall
 Marjorie Stegall
 Wynne Stegall
 John Stevenson
 Betty Stevenson
 Billy Joe Stewart
 Kevin Stewart
 Charles L. Stewart, Jr.
 Jeannie Stewart
 Robbie Stewart
 Nan S. Stewart
 Eva Stokes
 William Stover
 Anne Stover
 Dorothy Summerlin
 Stan Summerlin
 Jane Summerlin
 Jerry L. Surratt
 Alice Surratt
 Andrea Surratt
 Emily Surratt
 Lyndia Tart
 Jay Taylor

Mary Taylor
 Don B. Thomas
 Elaine Thomas
 Angie Thomas
 Sharon Thomas
 Jerry Thomas
 Ann Thomas
 Max Thomas
 Joyce Thomas
 Debbie Thomas
 Callie Tomberlin
 Boyce Tomberlin
 Gertrude Tomberlin
 Clemon Tomberlin
 Myra Tomberlin
 Mike Tomberlin
 Jeff Tomberlin
 Sherrill Traywick
 Ruby Traywick
 Ruth Trull
 Tim Trull
 Hayne T. Trull
 Lois Trull
 Linda Trull
 Vance Walden
 Kathryn Tomberlin
 Gene Walter
 Joyce Walter
 Steve Walter
 Elliott Ward
 Sharon Ward
 Paul Ward
 Christy Ward
 John Watson
 Nell Watson
 Rick Watson
 Pearl Watson
 Alan Williams
 Shirley Williams
 Ben Williams

Lois Williams
 Eva Williams
 Charles R. Williams
 Margaret Williams
 Kelly Williams
 Laura Williams
 David Williams
 Connie Williams
 Mary Williams
 Henry Frank Williams
 Ann Williams
 Kate Williams
 Annie Williams
 Bryte Williams
 Ann H. Williams
 Myron Williams
 Linda Williams
 Thomas E. Williams
 Carole Williams
 Brad Williams
 April Williams
 Bernice Witmore
 Dean Witmore
 Harry Witmore
 Edith Witmore
 Beatrice Witmore
 John Wilkie
 Bonnie Wilkie
 Walter Woodson
 Phyllis Woodson
 Ben Woodson
 Joe Woodson
 Nathan Woodson
 Jim Wooten
 Rhonda Wooten
 Robert Young, Sr.
 Dawn Young
 James Young
 Peter Young
 Tina Young

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INDEX

- Act Incorporating Wingate School in
 Union County, 127
 Ames Turnout, 47
 Amy — listed as Blak member, 18
 Anti-missionaries, 14
 Ashcraft, B. C., 60
 Ashcraft, Eugene: article in *Monroe*
 Journal 1933, 34
 Austin, B. D., 26, 29
 Austin, D. M., 57
 Awston, Bryant, charter member, 9,
 31
 Anniversary, 175th, 125
- Barnes, Betty (Mrs. Robert B.), 109,
 110, 123
 Baptisms: Meadow Branch 1883, 33
 Baptist Board of Foreign Missions, 13
Baptist Messenger, 51
 Baggitt, Janee Anne, 9
 Baggitt, John, 9
 Bass, J. B., 63
 Bass, Mahalia, 18
 Beach, C. M., 62, 68
 Beach, Mrs. C. M., 62
 Beasley, J. J., 33, 34
 Beasley, R. F., 46
 Beck, L. P., 69
 Benett, Metildah, 18
- Bennett, Elizabeth, 9
 Bennett, John, 9, 10
 Bennett, Joseph, 33
 Bennett, Mrs. L. C., 60
 Bennett, Tilley, 9
 Bentley, John, 9
 Benton, Bessie, 60
 Benton, James, 18, 25
 Benton, James W., 18
 Benton, Lydia, 18
 Benton, Martha, 18
 Benton, Rhonda, 9
 Benton, W. L., 18
 Bibb, Margaret, 25
Biblical Recorder: resolutions at the
 death of J. J. Beasley 1886, 33
 Biggers, Boyce L., 73
 Bivens, Anna (Mrs. J. W.), 99
 Bivens, Corinna Chaney (Mrs.
 Benson), 88
 Bivens, Druselia, 18
 Bivens, Eliza, 18
 Bivens, Evelinen, 18
 Bivens, H., 31
 Bivens, Henry, 33
 Bivens, J. A., 17, 34, 57
 Bivens, J. W., 34, 46, 48, 52, 58
 Bivens, John A., 63, 117
 Bivens, Mrs. John A., 71
 Bivens, Marget, 18

- Bivens, N. W., 34, 51
 Bivens, Nathaniel, 17
 Bivens, R., 31
 Bivens, W. C., 51
 Bivens, W. D., 62
 Bivens, Wm., 31
 Black, C. J., 32, 57, 58
 Blanton, Sankey, 93
 Bostic, Ron, 123
 Brasington, W. F., 13, 19, 55
 Breed, Joseph, 11
 Brewer, Mrs. C. M., 15
 Broom, Abram, 18
 Brown Creek Association, 12, 27, 30, 56
 Burris, Allen, 97
 Burris, C. C., 62, 68, 73, 95, 113
- Camp Sutton, 90
 Carreck, Thomas, 57
 Carroll, J. G., 51
 Carson, Nadine, 94
 Cassette ministry, 122
 Cemetery, 58, 113
 Centennial celebration 1910, 52
 Chaney, Ellie Mullis (Mrs. Lee), 47, 69
 Chaney, J. W., 34
 Chapman, Everette, 115, 120
 Charleston Association, 11
 Childs, Lawrence, consultant, 123
 China missions 1853, 25
 Church records, 95
 Church Rolls: 1853, 27; 1870-95, 39-43; 1897-21, 63-65; 1945-46, 100-105; 1984, 166-170
 Civil War, 31-32
 Clerks list, 131
 Cochrane, Bill, 96
 Coggins, N. C., 78, 89
 Coleman, Alice (Ms. Byrns), 11
 Colens, H., 33
 Collins, Elizabeth, 18
 Constitution and Bylaws 1981, 149-166
- Cople, H. C., 37
 Covenant and Rules of Decorum 1835, 20-23
 Covington, D. A., 30
 Cowser Circle (W.M.U.), 99
 Cowser, J. J., 97, 111
 Cox, Lynn, 125
 Crowder, Polly, 49, 60
 Culpepper, John, 23, 24, 55, 56
 Cuthbertson, John Henry, 89, 93
- Davis, A. C., 34
 Davis, Elder E. L., 27, 30, 32, 34, 37, 56
 Davis, J., 23
 Day-care: Nursery-Kindergarten committee, 109; purpose, 110; after school program, 111; committee, 114; continued, 121; twentieth anniversary, 125
 Deacons: emeriti 1929, 70; list, 130-131; ministry, 119; reorganization 1929, 70
 De Armand, Raymond, 95
 Dedication of children, 112
 Dedication of church 1922, 67
 Drumbrow, Patsy, 9
 Dry Chapel, 48
 Dry, M. B., 47, 49, 51
 Dry Reunions, 47
- Easter, a slave, 18
 Educational Building Committee 1960, 106
 Edwards, Easter, 18
 Elizabeth Church, Chesterfield, S.C., 20
 Elizabeth Church, Union County, N.C., 113
 Estridge, W. F., 52
 Evans, Della, 61
- Faulks Church 1851, 57
 Fletcher, Myzelle (Mrs. Sidney), 110
 Ford, Roy N., Jr., 125

Funderburke, B. S., 52
Funderburke, Woodrow, 118
Furman, Richard, 13

Gaddy, Bessie, 70
Gaddy, J. B., 93
Gamble, Harry, 90
German surrender, V.E. Day, 92
Gibson, Marget, 18
Gibson, Walter, 18
Glenn, George, 98
Goardvine Church, 11, 12, 54
Greer, R. V., 120
Griffen, Enoch H. 17
Griffen, J. W., 33
Griffen, John, 17
Griffen, John P., 17
Griffen, Joseph, 17, 33
Griffen, Martha, 18
Griffen, Melinda, 18
Griffen, Sarah, 18
Griffin, Culpepper, 18
Griffin, Mrs. Dwight, 98
Griffin, E. W., 34, 77
Griffin, Elizabeth, 9
Griffin, Enoch, 9
Griffin, J. Preston, 77
Griffin, Jane, 18
Griffin, John, 33, 55
Griffin, Julia (circle W.M.U.), 99
Griffin, M. W., 34, 68
Griffin, Mildred, 88
Griffin, W. W., 46
Griffin's "Meatting" House, 14
Grove Spring Baptist Church, 25
Guidelines for Church Officers and
Committees, 133-148
Gulledge, Elder Joel, 19, 55
Gulledge, John, 23

Hale, Hosea, 26, 29
Hamilton, William, 9
Hargette, R. C., 98

Headley Place, 12
Helmons, Gatecy, 18
Helmons, Jamima, 18
Helms, A. H., 31
Helms, Effie (Mrs. J. B.), 124
Helms, Floyd, 93
Helms, Floyd, Jr., 112
Helms, Helen (Mrs. J. Ned), 111
Helms, Jacob, 14
Helms, Mary Parker (Mrs. T. K.), 47
Helms, T. K., 94
Hicks, Leonard, 96
High Hill Primitive Baptist Church,
10
Hinson, Gladys Lowery (Mrs. R.
Burns), 98
Hobbs, Dewey, 97, 98, 109, 111
Hobgood, Sarah, 18
Hobgood, Theophilus, 17
Hogan, J. E., 93, 98
Home Mission Board Funds, 62
Homecoming: 1922, 67; 1973, 115-
117
Horton, Ruth D., 124
Hoyle, J. E., 63, 68
Huff, J. B., 70, 71
Huntley, T. J., 29

Ingram, Ann, 18
Ingram, Malachi, 18

Jacob, "a man of color", 13
James, W. H., 75
Japanese surrender, 93
Jefferson Standad Life Insurance
(debt), 77
Jenkins, Winburne, 13
Jewish Relief Fund, 68
Johnson, W. O, 71
Jones, Alice (circle W.M.U.), 99
Jones, Clyde, 68
Jones' property bought, 117
Joyner, N. S., 70

King, William, 18
Kirkman, Elaine (Mrs. Jerry), 118
Kiser, Mark, 17
Kolb, E. C., 77

Ladies Aid Society, 61
Lane's Creek (Lewellyns) 1793, 54
Larrimore, Joe, 96
Leah, a slave, 18
Lee, Elder J. F., 18, 25, 55
Legrand, F. O., 96
Lewallian, Jake, 14
Library, church, 111
Link, W. C., Jr., 89, 90, 91, 100
Long Range Planning Committee,
121-122
"Lost" minutes, 15
Love, Harold, 89, 93
Lowery, J. M. 62
Lowery, Thomas, 47
Lowman, Bob, 124

Maness, Mrs. T. W., 61
Maple Springs: branch Sunday School
1902, 51
Marks, Miss Pattie, 73
Marsh, Solloman, 14
Marshall, Daniel, 11
Marshville Baptist Church, 68
Mashe, W. J. T., 25, 31, 53
Mason, 55
Mason, T., 19
May, Sarah, 18
McConnell, Anne H., 120
McIntyre, G. M., 68
McIntyre, J. C., 62
McLean, Joe, 109
Meadow Branch Church Constitution
1812, 10
Meadow Branch Church Statistics
1854, 36
Midway Church, 90
Mill Creek Baptist Church, 27

Mission Society reorganized 1907, 61
Missions controversy, 13, 14, 15
Monroe First Baptist Church, 25
Monroe Journal: article 1917, 32
Moore, Hight C., 33, 37, 46
Moore, Samuel, 31
Moriah Association, 12, 14, 20, 23,
26, 30, 31, 56
Morras, Elder, 24
Morris, Greg., 31
Morris, William A., 55
Morrison, Governor Cameron, 68
Muckle, Coy, 69, 73
Mullis, Daniel, 47

Night services, 62
Normandy invasion (services), 90, 91
Notes by chapters, 170-174

Ordained List, 154

Parker, B. F., 46
Parker, Jack, 97
Parry, J., 31
Parry, Jeremiah, 18, 30
Parsonage: new 1922, 68; fire 1939,
77; bought, 89; sold, 114
Pastors called for indefinite time, 58
Pastors of Meadow Branch —
Wingate Baptist Church: list with
dates, 129-130
Pearl Harbor, 89
Perry, Alice (Mrs. W. M.), 96
Perry, Cecil, 62
Perry, Elizabeth, 18
Perry, J., 33
Perry, J. J., 63
Perry, John, Jr., 112
Perry, Tom, 47
Perry, W. M., 34, 47, 62, 68, 70
Perry, Walter, 98
Pistel, Margaret, 18

Pleasant View Church, 78
Polk, Jonathan, 11
Preslar, M. D. L., 58
Preson, Barbbery, 18
Price, A. W. H., 32
Price, Esther, 9
Prolen, Sherwood, 17
Puthey, William James, 9

Ray, Wilma Morgan (Mrs. Z. G.), 110
Recreation program (summer), 98
Reese, Max G., 109
Remodeling plans and committee
1982, 124
Retirement plan, 97
Revivals: 1857, 56; 1915, 58; 1944
called off, 91; 1950 combined with
college, 96
Richardson, J. B., 39, 45, 46, 47, 51
Richardson's Creek Church, 12, 56
Rickson, Minney, 9
Roberts, Allen (?), 9
Rock Rest Academy, 47
Roland, Sims (?), 31
Roling, Permelia, 18
Russell, Jane, 97

Sanders, G. M., 46
Sanders, Walter E., 94, 96
Sandusky, Fred, 93
Sandy Creek Association, 11
Sandy Creek Baptist Church, 11
Sesquicentennial 1960, 90;
Committees, 107; Program, 108
Seventy-five Million Campaign, 69
Shelton, David, 91, 94
Shepherd, Sarah, 18
Sherwood, A. C., 62
Shiloh Church 1847, 57
Shulvey, Elizabeth, 9
Sikes, E. W., 12, 52, 54
Sikes, Enoch, 17, 23, 30
Sikes, Hanah, 18

Sikes, Hannah, 9
Sikes, J. C., 46
Sikes, Nancy, 18
Simpson, Enos, 11
Simpson, M. B. 34
Sinkler, Martha, 18
Sixty-Plus organized, 113
Small, Mr. and Mrs. R. F., 94
Smith, Baron, 96
Smith, Budd E., 98, 118
Smith, David B., 120
Smith, Ethel K. (Mrs. Budd E.), 118
Smith, Ernest, 78
Smith, Lee, 93
Smith, R. D., 93
Snider, Elder, 25
Snider, Solomon, 56
Snow, J. A., 76
Society Hill, S. C., 11
Spring Hill Church, 25, 56
Stearnes, Ebenezer, 11
Stearnes, Elder Shubal, 11
Stearnes, Peter, 11
Stegall, Jacob, 9
Stegall, James, 9
Stewart, Coleman, 29
Stewart, G. M., 48, 68
Stewart, Nan (Mrs. R. G.), 122
Stover, William L., 112
Stowe, A. L., 32
Sunday School: organized 1845, 25;
report, 1912, 58; superintendents
listed, 132
Surratt, Jerry, 118

Taylor, Jay, 122
Teel, H., 31
Temperance discourse in 1839, 24
Thomas, Bessey, 9
Thomas, C. A. G., 51
Thompson (?), 9
Tom, a slave, 17
Tomberlin, Franky, 18
Treadaway, Daniel, 9

Trull, Col. Jonathan, 29

Trull, Elizabeth, 9

Trull, Thomas, S., 32

Trull, W. H., 32

Tyner, Aaron, 96

Tyner, B. Y., 51

Tyner, Mrs. B. Y., 61

Union Baptist Association Fortieth
Anniversary 1894, 36

Union Institute, 47

V.E. Day Service, 93

Vacation Bible School, 104

Violet, a slave, 18

Wake Forest University, 124

Walter, Eugene, 111, 113, 114

Watson, J. C., 33

Watson, John, 47

Welsh Neck Baptist Settlement, 11

Wesley Chapel Mission, 95

Wife abuse, 33

Wilhoit, G. O., 52

Williams, Alice (W.M.U. circle), 99

Williams, Ann (Mrs. Ralph), 123

Williams, Caty, 18

Williams, Charity, 18

Williams, Charles R., 98

Williams, Coalman, 17

Williams, Elam, 17

Williams, Elder, E. C., 25, 26, 27, 55,
56

Williams, Elizabeth, 18

Williams, Elizeabeth, 9

Williams, family cemetery, 10

Williams, Herron, 31

Williams, Heurin, 18

Williams, J. C., 31

Williams, J. H., 62, 70, 71

Williams, James, 33

Williams, John C., 17, 30

Williams, Jonathan, 17

Williams, Joseph, 9, 10

Williams, Layeeda M., 18

Williams, Lemuel, 12, 14, 19

Williams, Letha, 18

Williams, Lydia, 18

Williams, Martha (wife of Joseph), 10

Williams, Nancey, 18

Williams, Rhoda, 18

Williams, S. A., 52

Williams, Sarah, 18

Williams, T. A., 34

Williams, T. E., 52, 70

Williams, T. Earl, 98, 113

Williams, Thomas E., 33, 34

Williams, Vann, 68

Williams, W. B., 68

Williams, William Harrison, 88

Williams, Wilson M., 17

Williams, Mrs. Wilton, 61

Wilson, President Woodrow, 68

Wingate Baptist Church name
changed 1931, 71

Wingate School: Christian education
report 1876, 46; resolution to
establish 1895, 46; named, 47; first
building, 47; annual report 1897,
48; reports, 1899, 1900, 1906, 50;
brick building, 51; report 1916, 59,
60; report 1920, 72; new name, 73;
change of ownership 1930, 74;
burned 1932, 75; member of N. C.
State Convention, 95.

Wingate, Washington Manley, 47

Woman's Missionary Society: 1897,
60; 1916 report, 62; called W.M.U.,
report 1940-60, 99; history and
presidents, 119.

Yarborough, Elsie, 110

PART II

**WINGATE
BAPTIST CHURCH
1980-2009**

**BY
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Table of Contents for Part II

Page 187	FOREWORD and INTRODUCTION
Page 195	THE EARLY EIGHTIES: A TAPESTRY OF LIGHT AND SHADOW
Page 225	THE LATE EIGHTIES: TILLING NEW SOIL
Page 249	THE NINETIES: DREAMS AND RELATIONSHIPS
Page 287	THE NEW MILLENNIUM: LIVING THE GREAT COMMISSION
Page 323	CONCLUSION
Page 325	Appendix to Part II 1985-2009
Page 327	PASTORS and DEACONS
Page 331	THE CHURCH ROSTER – 2009
Page 339	CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS
Page 373	BIBLIOGRAPHY
Page 375	INDEX

Table of Contents	Page 1
Chapter I	Page 1
Chapter II	Page 1
Chapter III	Page 1
Chapter IV	Page 1
Chapter V	Page 1
Chapter VI	Page 1
Chapter VII	Page 1
Chapter VIII	Page 1
Chapter IX	Page 1
Chapter X	Page 1
Chapter XI	Page 1
Chapter XII	Page 1
Chapter XIII	Page 1
Chapter XIV	Page 1
Chapter XV	Page 1
Chapter XVI	Page 1
Chapter XVII	Page 1
Chapter XVIII	Page 1
Chapter XIX	Page 1
Chapter XX	Page 1
Chapter XXI	Page 1
Chapter XXII	Page 1
Chapter XXIII	Page 1
Chapter XXIV	Page 1
Chapter XXV	Page 1
Chapter XXVI	Page 1
Chapter XXVII	Page 1
Chapter XXVIII	Page 1
Chapter XXIX	Page 1
Chapter XXX	Page 1

FOREWORD AND INTRODUCTION TO PART II

As the present generation in “the oldest continuous missionary Baptist Church in Union County” prepares to celebrate its bicentennial anniversary, it is appropriate that we should acknowledge those upon whose shoulders we stand. We possess a glorious history, full of challenges, struggles, persistence, faith, hope, and love. It is humbling to realize that among the great crowd of witnesses who observe the Christian Church in the contemporary world, there are many watching who called Meadow Branch and Wingate Baptist Church their home fellowship.

I began my preparation to bring our written history up to contemporary times by reading again *“Saturday Before the Second Sabath:” The History of Meadow Branch-Wingate Baptist Church 1810-1984*. Carolyn Caldwell Gaddy’s words sprang to life for me once more, creating a powerful, ever-changing picture of this congregation as it witnessed to God’s love and forgiveness in this place. I expected to admire her work, instead I was enchanted. I expected to find many passages that would need polishing for the contemporary reader, instead I found a treasure of composition, imagination, and crafted history. I expected to labor in following her lead to recreate the years immediately preceding the bicentennial, instead I found ideas, words, and memories flooding my mind and inspiring me to pick up the rich threads Carolyn left for those who would continue the historical journey into the 21st century.

And so, dear members of our congregation, I urge you to discover the treasure which is yours by reading Carolyn Gaddy’s narrative. It is truly a professional work of scholarship, but written for anyone to understand and appreciate. It is by far the finest history of a local Baptist Church that I have discovered.

This writing could therefore only be dedicated to the memory of the one who so faithfully and lovingly illuminated our heritage and animated the spiritual giants who lived in Wingate past. Thank you, Carolyn Gaddy. We shall endeavor to carry the torch to yet another generation.

At the outset, we need a brief review of the historical context into which our church fellowship was born. Meadow Branch Baptist Church began in a brush arbor next to the road leading from Concord to Camden in 1810. In the ensuing 197 years until now, many things have changed. When those folks gathered and called themselves a church, Thomas

Jefferson had just completed his two elected terms as President of the United States to return to his life as a gentleman farmer at Monticello in central Virginia. Mr. Jefferson believed in an educated electorate, but no public system to accomplish that goal existed. He believed in peace, but our military had declined in its ability to defend our rights either on land or in international waters. He believed in freedom of conscience, but few of his contemporaries shared his conviction that religion could flourish without state support of at least a local establishment. In short, much remained to be done if the United States of America was to achieve its dreams.

In 1810, James Madison was President and North Carolina native Dolly Madison was First Lady. The new nation had 16 member states and was experimenting with democratic ideas that no nation had risked before. Our Constitution was less than 25 years old, its truth unproven and its ability to create a nation of freedom-loving individuals untested. Within two years of Meadow Branch's founding, the nation was at war with Great Britain once again with little chance of winning, and a great threat of losing the hard-won freedom of the Revolution.

North Carolina boasted a population of 556,526 according to the 1810 census. Large plantations, using slave labor to grow cash crops of tobacco, corn, and later cotton, dominated the eastern coastal plain where the soil was deep and fertile. But the planter and merchant classes of the small towns constituted only 5-7% of the population. Seventy percent of North Carolinians were small farmers and artisans of the backcountry, as the Piedmont was then called, who subsisted on what their land, forest, and waters provided or what their hands could make. Most were only a generation removed from their European ancestors and settled in North Carolina because land was too scarce and expensive in Pennsylvania and Virginia. There were plenty of Presbyterians, Lutherans, Moravians, and Baptists in the backcountry while Quakers favored the small eastern towns and eastern planters were mostly Episcopalian, the remnant of the old Church of England colonial establishment. The remaining 22-25% were Africans who were not "endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights" in the minds of most Americans. The nation had prohibited further importation of slaves into the United States in 1808, but most North Carolinians did not need nor could they afford to purchase a slave anyway, so the entire system was a matter of indifference to them.

This writer's family lived in North Carolina in 1810 and materials from them have come into his possession. The Burrell Rush family purchased a North Carolina Almanac written by astronomer John Beasley of Wake County, published by J. Gales of Raleigh for the year 1814. It listed Mr. Madison as President, earning a salary of \$25,000 per year and his Secretary of State, James Monroe earning \$5,000. Governor William Hawkins was paid \$1,600 annually. Anson County sent William Johnston to the North Carolina Senate and Mecklenburg was represented by William Davidson. These counties sent Joseph Pickett, D. Cuthbertson, Jon Harris and C. Harris to the House of Commons. In one almanac, among the many anecdotes and instructions on shoeing horses and dying cotton a deep blue, is a religious item titled:

MONITORIAL

"I do not understand your religion," said a careless man of the world to a humble disciple of Christ, "perhaps I should embrace it, if I could better comprehend it."

"If that is all," replied the Christian, "you are not far from becoming a fellow believer with me.—You are required no assent beyond your comprehension. But I will propose to you one or two precepts which it seems to me the essence of our religion.—Do you understand the following?—"All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

The other replied, that he perfectly understood that commandment.

"Is the following too deep for your comprehension? "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another."

"That too I think is very plain."

"Well, if you understand those two commandments, you [are led?] into all the mysteries of the Christian religion. Go, and when you have practiced these two to perfection, God shall introduce you into higher mysteries[sic], and confer upon you joys, which neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive."¹

Another almanac contained a Christmas message which marveled at the idea of the Almighty, Invisible, Creator God appearing in humiliation as a baby, with all the weaknesses of mortal man. "Certainly [the divine mercy] was a love which infinitely surpasses all I can merit; a love beyond all I could conceive or hope; a love at the thought of which I can only

¹ [John Beasley,] Gales's North Carolina Almanack for 1814, Raleigh: J. Gales, Printer, p. 24. Two words are obscured by a hole in the rotten paper, but the meaning is clear. The collection includes six almanacs published for years between 1812 and 1818 .

admire, adore, and be silent!" The founders of Meadow Branch would have possessed similar gems of theological truth in 1810.

Carolyn has shown that the Meadow Branch Baptist Church possessed significant diversity from the outset. Two streams of Baptist tradition converged, each contributing to the character of the congregation. First, from the Welch Neck Baptists of South Carolina came the Charleston influence of English Baptists with educated ministers whose modified Calvinism asserted that God intended through his Son to redeem all of mankind ultimately. Charleston's English Baptist ancestors of the 17th century were dissenters within the Church of England who believed that further drastic reformation of that Protestant body was necessary for it to conform to Scripture.

John Smyth and Thomas Helwys led their dissenting congregations to Holland around 1607 in search of freedom of conscience. Under the influence of Amsterdam Mennonites, Smyth rejected infant baptism on New Testament grounds. Smyth died in Amsterdam and Helwys returned to England with a remnant of his congregation and resettled in London at Spitalfield, south of the Thames. Helwys wrote *A Short Declaration of the History of Iniquity*, (London, 1612), the "first claim for freedom of worship to be published in the English language."² Leonard Busher, a member of the Spitalfield church, published a tract entitled *Religious Peace or a plea for liberty of conscience* in which he argued that any person, even a Jew or Roman Catholic, should be able to write, debate, and print any matter relating to religion. Busher also advocated baptism by immersion in 1614, almost thirty years before it was commonly adopted by English Baptists in the 1640s. Thus the primary distinctives of Baptists were firmly established in England and transferred to America in migrating congregations and preachers. English Baptists moved from Maine to Charleston in the 1680s. The Charleston congregation and later Pastor Richard Furman upheld these Baptist traditions and added fervent support to William Carey's 1792 fulfillment of the Great Commission in his India mission. Furman strongly advocated the cooperation of all Baptists in America in support of missions to carry the Christian message around the world. For its first five years of existence, Meadow Branch held membership in the Charleston Association until the Baptists in the vicinity formed the Moriah Association in 1815.

² Robert G. Torbet, *A History of the Baptists*, Third Edition, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Judson Press, 1963, p. 38.

Those who established Meadow Branch also drew on a second fertile source of Baptist strength in North Carolina. The Sandy Creek Baptist Church, located in present-day Randolph County, is acknowledged as the mother church of Baptists in the South. Inspired by the First Great Awakening, Baptists from Connecticut moved southward, including Shubal Stearns and Daniel Marshall, both hell-fire preachers whose words galvanized their hearers into evangelistic zeal. The influence of Sandy Creek is clearly traceable among the early Meadow Branch members.

These two traditions became the backbone of the new church, providing both healthy diversity and at times contentious disagreement. In the 1830s Meadow Branch split into two congregations over two questions: whether local congregational autonomy was compromised by national organizations promoting international missionary endeavors and whether the local church should support the education of its youth. The group retaining the church building and the name believed in both missionary evangelism and education. In 1845, the congregation began intensive study of the Bible, occupying most of the Lord's Day, following the example of various North Carolina religious groups. This was called "Sunday School." A committee for spiritual oversight disciplined members for conduct unbecoming a Christian, such as use of profanity, drunkenness, or unexplained absence from worship. The committee always sought repentance of the wandering members and exclusion was the last resort. The Woman's Missionary Society was organized in 1897, followed by the Royal Ambassadors and Sunbeams in 1910.

The congregation supported Wake Forest College from its establishment in 1834, took pride in its accomplishments, and encouraged young men to attend this North Carolina Baptist institution. In the 1890s, Meadow Branch members were among the local leaders who proposed a new school, denominational but not sectarian, offering an opportunity for basic education within a Christian context. When it opened in 1896, it was named for a Wake Forest graduate, popular preacher, and deceased President of that college, Washington Manley Wingate. He embodied the character, enthusiasm, and educated intellect that would be the goal for the students of the Wingate School.

Among the treasures in boxes of miscellaneous papers passed to this writer by Carolyn Gaddy was hidden a small, well-worn, ruled account book such as men of an earlier day used to record and maintain their affairs. It has no covers, no owner's name, but internal evidence shows that it likely belonged to John W. Bivens. The book contains a

variety of notes. Some record financial “subscriptions” to various mission causes, recording the giver and the gift; other parts appear to be the records of hours worked on a farm by a “Clarence” and “Jim,” while another section speaks of painting the church. The most interesting are pages clearly relating to the Wingate School about 1910, already 14 years old with four professors and 270 students, including 53 boarders. One page heading reads: “Pledged to Support of School for term beginning Aug 10/09,” and lists gifts totaling [\$]275. Another page:

Wingate, NC Jan. 11/10

Meeting of the Bd of Trustees of the Wingate School

Present J L Bennett, chm, J. A Bivens, B F Parker, W P Griffin, W M Perry, J B Mangum, T E Williams, H C Moore, A C Davis and J W Bivens. Rev. A C Davis leads in prayer.

Upon request, Prof Tyner explains object of meeting to be to arrange for better accommodations for the School....

ExCom reported to Bd that we need a new building & recommended its erection.

Rev. A C Davis moved that we undertake the erection of a new School building. Motion unanimously carried....

The building committee met on April 18, 1910 and set May 2 for “receiving bids for erection of School building,” asked J.A. Bivens to secure notes on the subscription list, and to pay [?McMichael] \$100 on plans for the building. In the board session of April 25, the building committee was “authorized to exercise their best judgment in prosecuting the work of erecting the new School building” and “Prof B Y Tyner and J G Carroll are elected to have charge of the School for another year.” The following year the board authorizes “a canvass for benefit of School in Oct & Nov if satisfactory arrangements can be made.”³ In November 1911, the new building opened for students and the Wingate School had achieved a major step forward. Most of the men involved with the school were members of Meadow Branch. The new building rose in within sight of the church house. In 1922 when a new church building was constructed, Meadow Branch stood adjacent to School property.

³ Minutes of the Board of Trustees of the Wingate School, January 11, 1910, April 25, 1910, April 24, 1911. [J W Bivens, Secretary and Treasurer]. Wingate Baptist Church Historical Collection.

For a century, the Wingate School/College/University and the Meadow Branch/Wingate Church have maintained an informal covenant. Members frequently sent their sons and daughters to Wingate. Pastors served on the faculty. Faculty members worshipped there, joined the congregation, sang in the choir, taught Sunday School classes and even served as pastor to the church on some occasions. When the administration building burned in 1932, college classes met in church classrooms. In 1931, the Meadow Branch congregation, without significant opposition, changed its name to Wingate Baptist Church.

The original diversity of Meadow Branch has been perpetuated. Some current members have roots deep in Union County and can count several generations of ancestors who worshipped in this congregation. Their commitment constitutes a bedrock foundation of stability and continuity in the oldest continuous missionary Baptist church in Union County. Conversely, faculty and staff of the school have come from many other places and cultural settings, from large urban congregations and other denominations. They have added their ideas and efforts to the work of Wingate Baptist.

Occasionally people in Union County who are invited to visit Wingate as prospective members indicate that our diversity is a distinct barrier for them. They say that some members have "too much education," implying that education and spiritual vitality do not mix. Examples of such incompatibility are never cited, but assumed proven by definition of the terms. A negative conjunction of those two characteristics does not seem to exist in the Wingate Church. Some churches with similar composition do experience serious competition between "town and gown," but such conflict in Wingate's history has been rare and muted if present at all. The diverse elements of this congregation can sing both Fanny Crosby's "Tell Me the Story of Jesus" and Harry Emerson Fosdick's "God of Grace and God of Glory." Some members bring their beloved *King James Version* to worship and others Eugene Peterson's *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language*. And they may hear yet another translation from the pulpit. At Christmas, we light the Advent candles and hang beribboned wreaths of green from our balcony. At Easter, we mark foreheads on Ash Wednesday, drape a wooden cross with purple on Friday and on Sunday sing "He Lives." We thrive upon and are enriched by our diversity because we acknowledge "One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism."

As this study proceeds, we will watch the logical places of diversity for friction to surface, such as elections to the Diaconate, Pastor Search Committees, and positions of leadership. Likewise, we will examine the faithfulness of the Wingate congregation to its Baptist heritage, especially regarding the most important distinctive from the very beginning—the freedom of individual and congregational consciences in matters of belief and practice. We will study Wingate’s response to new developments within Christianity and our society, such as the lay ministry and gender equality on all matters and especially those of leadership. We will evaluate Wingate’s fulfillment of the Great Commission through the giving of talent, time and resources to carry the gospel throughout the world and to minister in Christ’s name in time of crisis and need. We will trace trends in theology among Baptists, sifting ideas by our study and understanding of God’s Word Incarnate, Written, and Spoken. In all of these dimensions we believe God will reveal to us His Truth and His call to discipleship.

Many church members have contributed in ways large and small to the research and development of this narrative. Their efforts are greatly appreciated. Special thanks in the preparation for publication must be acknowledged to Derrill Smith, Alice Surratt, Jerry Thomas, Robert Billinger, and John Sykes.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE EARLY EIGHTIES: A TAPESTRY OF LIGHT AND SHADOW

Wingate Baptist Church in the 1980s traveled on promising but dangerous roads. The congregation embraced new ideas and initiatives, but sometimes stumbled from lack of commitment and murky understanding of stances assumed and changes begun. In 1964, Dewey Hobbs left Wingate to assume leadership of the First Baptist Church of Marion, and in 1990 Mitchell Simpson departed to lead the University Baptist Church in Chapel Hill. Both pastors left amid lingering tears but with enduring gratitude for their contributions to the Wingate congregation. Between them, however, three consecutive ministers found themselves in conflict with parts of the congregation for one reason or another. Their departure was contentious and abrupt, leaving deep scars on both sides.

Our historic affirmation of congregational autonomy has given us an awkward and sometimes flawed system of the congregational calling of a pastor. Wingate is not the only Baptist congregation which has experienced difficulty in the rotation of pastorates. Nor is it unique to the period under consideration. Hidden among old church records was discovered an old red box, originally holding Baby Ruth candy bars priced at five cents each, which contained a letter written by the pastor of Meadow Branch Baptist Church on letterhead dated 1925.

My dear Brethren:-

Two weeks have passed since the deacons met and after two hours of deliberation decided to inform the pastor that there seemed to be so much opposition to his ministr[sic] here that he should resign within the next three months.

[The pastor immediately presented his resignation to the congregation at worship and it was accepted, but later,] the chairman of the board of deacons learned that many of the members were not satisfied with what had been done, and so he called a second meeting of the deacons, at which meeting authority was given for the regular Saturday [church] conference to be announced and held.⁴

Some clearly believed that the congregation *at worship* could not transact any business. Thus, in an orderly fashion, the pastor presented

⁴ Letters of J. Edwin Hoyle, June 28 and July 11, 1925. Wingate Baptist Church Historical Collection.

his resignation to the congregation in a *Saturday conference* and it was accepted. He had led Meadow Branch for three and a half years. Therefore the calling of pastors, and occasionally their dismissal, is a part of Baptist congregational autonomy.

To understand and interpret this difficult historical period of the 1980s one must look briefly at the broader context within which the Wingate congregation lived. The national malaise of the time is generally recognized but frequently disregarded in the study of local history. But in this case the national tone may have significantly influenced Wingate's circumstances. Perhaps our perception can be sharpened by examining this period so aptly titled in one study "Years of Doubt 1969-1981."⁵

The late 1960s witnessed the disaster for the United States called Vietnam. In the beginning it was a minor operation like others in which Americans tried to help an underdog nation survive against an overwhelming totalitarian regime. Sometimes we succeeded, as in South Korea; other times we belatedly saw the risks and withdrew, as in the Cuban Bay of Pigs Invasion. Our assistance of South Vietnam preoccupied Lyndon Johnson when he preferred to work on improving America for Americans with his many-faceted domestic program including the Civil Rights legislation. But Johnson wanted no embarrassment on a world scale resulting from our international intrusions among small nations. Thus one decision to escalate efforts to secure a victory led to yet another. The Pentagon refused to define it as a war, preferring "a limited engagement." And the regime in South Vietnam appeared so corrupt that many Vietnamese disavowed it. By 1968 Johnson, to everyone's surprise, declined a sure reelection, and Richard Nixon continued the national policies with increasingly negative consequences. We bombed supply lines in adjacent nations, we realized that we were involved in a civil war in which soldiers and civilians could not be distinguished, and we found that returning American soldiers frequently struggled with the unwelcome baggage of drug use and addiction.

The American population, while trying to honor the effort and sacrifice of American soldiers, 58,000 of whom died, increasingly viewed the political decisions on the war by those in power as flawed and self-serving. Still Nixon promised to get us out of Vietnam with honor though that seemed less and less certain as South Vietnam neared collapse. We heard stories of atrocities on both sides, of villages savaged by frightened

⁵ Peter Jennings and Todd Brewster, *The Century*, New York: Doubleday, 1998 p. 423ff.

United States troops. We saw pictures of the murder of a POW, hands tied behind his back, of a naked pre-teen girl, terror etched on her face, running for her life, of Saigon being evacuated by helicopters with Vietnamese clinging to the landing gear as the ships lifted off. And we elected Nixon to a second term in 1972, only to discover a place called Watergate and campaign dirty tricks in the name of an incumbent President assured of victory in the election but desiring an even clearer mandate from the people. Before the truth came out and the matter settled, Vice-President Agnew had resigned in the midst of charges of earlier political corruption in Maryland and President Nixon had faced us on television saying 'I will not lie to you, I had no knowledge of the Watergate break-in,' even as an aide was organizing the Oval Office tapes which proved that even a President can lie. Nixon's resignation brought us Gerald Ford, an honorable man who struggled to restore the confidence of the nation. His campaign against a stagnant economy and wartime inflation failed. He pardoned Richard Nixon, a widely criticized decision which deprived the American people of the desperately needed sense of justice and closure to the Nixon presidency.

Then came Jimmy Carter, a Georgia peanut farmer and former governor, a born-again Christian and Sunday School teacher, projecting a kinder and more gentle Presidency. World politicians viewed Carter as weak. His decisions frequently sought a middle ground and satisfied nobody. In the Camp David Accords, he made progress in defusing tension between Egypt and Israel, but he watched as the Soviet Union pushed into weak Afghanistan. Carter's only reaction was to boycott the Olympics in Moscow. He seemed helpless in the face of Iranian militants who kidnapped and held hostage U. S. embassy workers in Tehran. His treaties with China and Panama were viewed positively and he made progress in the management of nuclear arms. However, the economy spun out of control, with long gas lines, inflation rising over 53% between 1975 and 1980 and the prime interest rate rocketing to an all-time high 21.5% in December, 1980. America refused him a second chance, electing a movie actor and successful governor of California by a wide margin. Carter's post-Presidency leadership and political advice have continued the positive aspects of his administration, elevating his stature in the eyes of most Americans.

Ronald Reagan received a gift on his inauguration day—the hostages in Iran were released. Americans breathed a sigh of relief although our pride was seriously wounded and would heal only over

several years. Reagan had his own problems with insurgency in Central America, but managed to restore order quickly in Grenada and dampen down Soviet aggression against the Afghans. His supply-side fiscal policy did not solve the difficulties but his tax cuts slowly began to right the economic ship. The President's preference to watch old movies in the White House before major national and international policy meetings did not at first encourage Americans. But his leadership principles began to work.

Although this brief sketch of national political leadership is incomplete, those who lived through the times will recognize its essential truth. Not all American leaders failed, but certainly doubt existed in the minds of Americans whenever authority asserted its power. This was supposed to be a democracy where people elected leaders who worked for the benefit of the country and its citizens. Government was pledged to protect freedom, to defend the right, and to recognize that first and last "in God We Trust." In the seventies and eighties, these ideas and values were muted at best, sometimes threatened. These were hard days.

Carolyn Gaddy's history of the Meadow Branch/Wingate Baptist Church concluded in 1984 and was conceived and composed during these difficult years. We were too immersed in the challenges and problems of the time to be able to understand their roots or interpret their historical meaning. The epitaph "two sides to every story" was probably accurate but does not suggest either immediate or lasting solutions. Any assertion that historical study can eliminate old wounds is simplistic, but the passage of time can be a welcome healer. Standing in the early years of the 21st century, Wingate Baptist Christians, understanding their history with forgiveness born of Christian grace, can and have carried the congregation to calmer water and firmer ground.

In 1979, Dr. Roy N. Ford, Jr. of Amherst, Virginia, accepted a call to the pastorate and the Wingate congregation welcomed him, wife June and son Kevin into its midst. He filled the pulpit on September 16. David Smith and R. V. Greer received thanks for their thoughtful sermons and faithful service during a long interim.

Dr. Ford found a church eager for leadership and activity. In the Bible Studies Class in Sunday School, Dr. Bob Barnes began a study of the Gospel of John in October. Dr. Ford started work in Galatians on Wednesday Evenings. The mid-week service offered musical opportunities and Missions Friends for preschoolers, three groups of GAs,

two of RAs and both Junior and Senior Acteens. A Youth Fellowship met on Sunday evenings.⁶ A new Sunday School class for Younger Adults was organized with Jim McCoy as the teacher. The Sixty-Plus Group visited Boone for the fall colors. After welcoming 274 to Sunday School on October 3 and 330 to worship on October 10, a goal of 300 was established for High Attendance Sunday, despite the new regulation that required the sanctuary to be heated to a maximum of only 65 degrees. Pastor Ford encouraged everyone to wear heavier clothing inside the church during the winter months in the midst of the oil shortage.⁷ The Sunday School attendance fell short of the ambitious goal by 27 people, but spirits were high and momentum was strong.

Pastor Ford made a special appeal for contributions for hunger relief in Cambodia in November. The congregation responded with \$1,073, exceeding the \$1,000 goal and followed with a generous offering to the Lottie Moon Christmas offering. With a goal of \$5,000, the gifts totaled \$5,021 and children brought White Christmas gifts to benefit North Carolina Baptist Children's Home in Thomasville. Roy wrote:

Christmas reminds us, you and me, of a God who sends light into the darkness. This Christmas we face the dark: Iran's holding of Americans as hostages, 2 million starving Cambodians, or the projected economic recession with its unemployment. But Christmas comes as Christ came in the night so that we might see God's light.

And Christmas finds that light, no matter how shaded the glow, in the gifts collected for children who would not enjoy the toys that others have. The light appears in the food given for people in need. The giving rekindles a glow of nostalgia for a better world that is free of hate and discord. Into the darkness comes the light, Jesus Christ.⁸

Early in the new year the worshipping congregation began to register its presence by signing a register as it passed down the pew. This provided a more accurate record of attendance and the names of visitors who might become prospects. The first count published in *The Chrysalis* in February recorded 231 in Sunday School and 346 in worship.⁹ Several of Roy's messages in the newsletter addressed phases of the worship experience. He wrote, for example: the worship service

⁶ *The Chrysalis*, October 3, 1979.

⁷ "From the Pastor," *The Chrysalis*, October 17, 1979.

⁸ "From the Pastor," *The Chrysalis*, December 12, 1979.

⁹ *The Chrysalis*, February 13, 1980.

is an hour when we turn from the cares [of everyday living] so that God can provide us the strength to face them. It is not meant to be a time of escape nor neglect of our duties, for it is a time to enable us to face them with renewed strength. As we set aside an hour to hear God's word and sing His praises, we prepare ourselves to live the other hours as God's children in the world. The worship service ends so that the service may begin in our homes, our offices and our schools.¹⁰

The Women's Missionary Union held the "Week of Prayer for Home Missions" in March with gatherings in various homes for study and prayer relative to the tasks in missions within America. Both day and evening meetings were provided and momentum culminated in the Sunday worship ingathering of gifts. The goal of \$2,000 was met with contributions of \$2,050. A Youth Revival led by a team from the college Christian Student Union and Wingate youth occurred in April. All ages were invited and participated in the cottage prayer meetings preceding the event. Dr. Bobby Bell led a study for the congregation titled "Challenges of Family Living," with recommendations of books in our library pertaining to the subject. Pastor Ford's sermons in this period showed his perception of the problems and challenges of the contemporary world and the manner in which a Christian dealt with them. His writings in the *Chrysalis* pointing toward upcoming sermons noted the woes of the time: American hostages in Iran, steepening inflation, the shortage of oil and its cost, and anxiety over the future. He turned to the Book of Revelation to show that for early Christians in Roman times, appearance was not necessarily God's reality. Revelation then and now gives us an example of visionary faith in difficult times.

When we focus on problems, we may ignore assets and forget possibilities. We, who are a people of faith, face our present in the light of the past. We face the present knowing that Christian people in Roman times could face times in the arena when their blood would provide the thrill sought by blood-thirsty mobs, but they faced that time with a vision of what God was going to do. For in that time, John saw a vision where people's tears were dried and a new day would beckon. In our worship on Sunday, we shall consider how faith's vision enables us to endure in the 1980s.¹¹

He later addressed Jesus' ascension with the affirmation that "Such a condition cannot be described; it can only be imagined by those

¹⁰ *The Chrysalis*, February 6, 1980.

¹¹ *The Chrysalis*, April 10, 1980.

who remain. The words of the Gospel: 'Why do you stand there looking up at the sky?' recognized that we do not find Jesus by looking, but by going from Jerusalem to Judea, to Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth."

In October, the church in conference approved the Deacons' recommendation to establish a Church Council composed of the Chairman of Deacons, Sunday School Director, Minister of Music, WMU Director and committee chairs. The Council will plan and coordinate church activities.¹² Dr. Barnes initiated a new study in his Sunday School class: "Christian Ethics," studying Biblical materials relating to marriage, divorce, abortion, euthanasia, justice, race relations, and economic life. For the community Thanksgiving service, Wingate Baptist and Wingate United Methodist joined host Nicey Grove Baptist Church to hear speaker Reverend Janice Clark, pastor of the local Methodist congregation. The WMU Week of Prayer for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering featured Dr. E. Luther Copeland, Missionary to Japan as the primary speaker. For the first time, the congregation lighted candles on an Advent Wreath. The four candles represented Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace, one for each Advent Sunday, and a center candle lighted last to represent the coming of Christ, the Light of the World. In another Christmas first for Wingate, a beautiful Chrismon Tree graced the podium, decorated with carefully crafted symbols of the Christian faith, most made by members of the church. The congregation celebrated Communion on Christmas Eve.

While Wingate was settling in with Roy Ford as its pastor, clearly most activities from the past continued strongly and new initiatives were added. Yet everyone realized that the most important and unavoidable task at hand was a physical plant in bad need of repair and renovation. Or, as discussed by the pastor search committee and Dr. Ford, perhaps the congregation would choose to build a new facility. The congregation had commissioned a new Long Range Planning Committee in March, 1979. An open church forum occurred in March 1980 to discuss the physical facilities and to present architectural studies. After two years of meetings to formulate and prioritize the directions of growth, the committee chaired by Tom Williams made recommendations in 1981 which the church approved in conference.

¹² *The Chrysalis*, October 8, 1980. Church Conference Minutes, October 12, 1980.

1. That the complete membership of Wingate Baptist Church participate in a Stewardship Education Program through Sunday School Class Guidance with a goal of 100% membership participation in giving....
2. That Wingate Baptist Church participate in an active outreach program designed to attract newcomers and unchurched in our community. This will include Wingate College students....
3. That the church elect [no later than June 1, 1981] a remodeling committee for the Sanctuary Building. This remodeling committee should be prepared to begin actual remodeling in the calendar year 1982 and completion no later than calendar year 1983.
4. That Wingate Baptist Church establish a remodeling fund. That a committee be elected to promote this remodeling fund [no later than June 1, 1981]. That a goal of \$100,000 be set for this fund and that the amount be achieved no later than December 31, 1981
5. The Wingate Baptist Church day care committee should explore the possibility of establishing a 4-year old kindergarten....
6. As Wingate Baptist Church progresses in the above outlined programs, and we begin to see improvements in Stewardship and Operational budgets, the personnel committee should explore the possibility of employing additional staff personnel for education [either as a Youth Director or Associate Pastor]....
7. That Wingate Baptist Church refurbish the existing Educational Building and begin the construction of additional education space including a new kitchen and fellowship hall. This to begin in 1985 and should be completed in 1987¹³

The church employed Charles A. Hastings of Charlotte to draw up plans and specifications for the sanctuary renovation at an expected fee of \$10,000. The remaining indebtedness of \$25,000 to Wingate College for the parsonage was borrowed on a 90-day note from the local bank at an annual interest rate of 19%. It was (and is now) startling to think of such a rate, but it reflected the financial circumstances of the day. The nation was caught in double-digit annual inflation, which, between 1965 and 1985 raised the cost of living by 241%.¹⁴ To dampen inflation, interest rates were raised again and again. In May, 1981, the prime rate was 20.50%. But all efforts were ineffective and the cost of borrowing did not fall to single digits until 1985.¹⁵

Church budget receipts were also showing the financial strain of the time. In September, 1980, the Deacons designated a "Prove the

¹³ Minutes of the Church Conference, May 3, 1981.

¹⁴ "The Shrinking Value of the Dollar [1913 to the present]," www.infoplease.com/ipa.

¹⁵ "History of the United States Prime Rate from 1947 to the Present," www.wsjprimerate.us.

Tithe" day because giving for the year was \$13,000 behind. The shortfall report became a regular topic of discussion among the Deacons for the next several years.

In the midst of these discussions, the congregation was also examining itself, its programs, and its potential through a consultant, Lawrence Childs, Jr. His report was presented on December 7, 1980. Strangely, the Board of Deacons' minutes did not mention this twelve-page, perceptive study, even though 170 members completed a survey in October and 22 were personally interviewed by the consultant.¹⁶ Graphs showed resident membership and average Sunday School attendance peaking in 1976-77, membership losses higher than additions in 1978-80 with baptisms declining significantly during the period. The survey revealed that the church had a large percentage (25.5%) of members living alone and another 32% with no children of the home, indicating that the Wingate congregation needed a stronger pastoral care ministry than most churches of its size. The low number of young members and the large number of seniors revealed a lack of outreach. Actual participation in congregation activities was abnormally low and 26% of responders said "if they were new, they would not choose the Wingate congregation as a home." Despite the high financial potential of the church, actual contributions lagged, indicating a lack of enthusiasm for the existing programs and commitment to a challenging goal.

Mr. Childs summarized the issues facing the congregation in several categories. 'Wingate's diversity could be a source of strength, but its programs do not provide a variety of experiences. The expectations of some members are not being met. The sanctuary needs renovations. Church staff is inadequate to meet the needs of a congregation of this character and age. Wingate needs a clear sense of mission to avoid a dissipation of energies. The lack of a challenge causes anemic stewardship. The congregation's evangelistic outreach has stagnated.'

The consultant recommended several solutions. The church, he wrote, needs a new and aggressive long-range planning committee. Its diversity would support two morning worship services of significantly different character to minister to different populations. By validating the worship needs of all members, Wingate could increase total participation and satisfaction. The church should remodel the sanctuary to eliminate the annex which frequently promotes "the feeling of observing others at

¹⁶ Deacon's Minutes do not discuss Mr. Childs' report.

worship rather than being a part of it." A strong deacon ministry could assist in the pastoral needs of the congregation, but an adequate staff must address the extensive pastoral needs of an aging congregation. Additional personnel should be chosen with an eye to the congregation's diversity; their talents should complement rather than duplicate, in order to meet the needs of all the people. Evangelism and outreach should become a priority, since the church is experiencing only internal growth as members bear children.¹⁷

The congregation addressed these recommendations over the decade of the 1980s. *The Chrysalis* issues of 1981 revealed a high level of activity. Dr. Ford conducted the January Bible Study of Philippians, the men of the church met for monthly breakfasts, as did the Sixty-Plus Group. The congregation ordered 300 new hymnals for the sanctuary, the women served a covered-dish supper for the international students of the college, and the cassette ministry reported 47 visits to shut-ins in December. A discipleship class for youth began on Sunday evenings of February and March. Plans proceeded for a pictorial church directory. Sidney Fletcher, Mitch Eudy, and Don Merrill worked with the RAs while Jane McCoy directed the youth choir and Janet Freeman the adult handbell choir. Plans were laid for "Homecoming" on May 17 with Dr. Dewey Hobbs as speaker. Other former ministers and members were invited to come and renew friendships. Brenda Tomberlin, Director of the DayCare Center, reported that she and her staff of three full-time and four part-time workers cared for thirty-four full-time children and another thirty-three who came after school. For the first two months of 1981, Sunday School attendance averaged 218 and worship 296.¹⁸ On Palm Sunday the choir presented "On the Passion of Christ" and on Thursday a Tenebrae Communion commemorated the suffering and death of Jesus.¹⁹ For the Union Baptist Association meeting in October, the church reported average Sunday School attendance for the year at 202 and worship at 277.²⁰ Everything could not be fixed at once but significant strides were made and the results showed during the next

¹⁷ Lawrence Childs, Jr., "A Report on Church Consultation for Wingate Baptist Church, Wingate, North Carolina," December 7, 1980. Wingate Baptist Church Historical Collection.

¹⁸ *The Chrysalis*, January 13,21,28, February 4,11,18,25, March 4, 1981.

¹⁹ *The Chrysalis*, April 8, 1981.

²⁰ *The Chrysalis*, October 21, 1981.

decades. From generation to generation the same process must be repeated.

Early 1982 was full of youth preparation for a February trip to the Friendship Methodist Church in Fallston, NC to present a program of puppets and handbell performance for a family night program which included Baptist youth from all of Cleveland County. Bob Lowman, minister to youth, organized the excursion as a part of the spring Youth Revival.²¹ The Women's Groups staged their annual covered-dish dinner in late January for international students studying at Wingate College. The winter Bible-study in Jeremiah was well received and attendance figures for winter months showed enthusiasm: Baptist Men's Day had 223 in Sunday School and 365 in morning worship followed by the women's day with 268 in Sunday School and 382 in worship. Youth Week, '82 was entitled "A Journey into Discipleship" and included Joy Explosion on Friday evening and a retreat on Saturday. The week of special activity climaxed with a Youth Revival led by an Outreach Team from the college and Wingate Baptist youth.²² In April, the Sixty-Plus Group visited Glencairn Gardens in Rock Hill and on May 1 a clean-up, spruce-up day for the church and grounds signaled the coming of spring in Wingate. The DayCare ministry to children continued to grow in size and quality. In the summer Director Brenda Tomberlin reported a total of 71 children in six separate groups, the largest being 30 After School Children who enjoy gymnastics, t-ball, and Little League. They also participate in swimming, nature trips, fishing, and cooking.²³

In March, 1982, the church in conference was presented with an exciting but ambitious remodeling plan. It included the necessary renewal of exterior such as roof repair, re-pointing exterior brick, storm windows, and infrastructure renewal of electrical, plumbing, heating and air conditioning. The committee shared an architectural drawing of sanctuary renovation to include a restored coffered ceiling, new light fixtures, and relocation of the baptistry behind the choir with a large stained glass window occupying about half of the wall behind. The choir loft, baptistry, and window would be framed by matching columns.

Immediately a motion was made from the floor that "no structural changes be made in the church sanctuary." The motion was

²¹ "To the Youth," *The Chrysalis*, January 14, February 17, 1982.

²² *The Chrysalis*, March 11, 18, 24, 1982.

²³ "A Salute to the Day Care," *The Chrysalis*, June 24, 1982.

ruled out of order, since the committee had asked that its report be considered for two weeks before a vote. An appeal of the Chair's decision failed to receive a second.

On March 31, the full presentation was begun with a review of the church's actions to date. Chairman Baron Smith yielded to committee members to present details: Jim Edwards discussed the plans for the exterior and maintenance, Frank McGuirt presented plans for electrical and mechanical work, Charles Ray Williams detailed the improvements and changes to the interior of the sanctuary, and Mary Sims presented decorating additions and changes to basement classrooms. Once again a member who earlier voiced opposition to the proposal moved that "the church do all the necessary maintenance work in this building to keep it nice, but that no structural changes be made to the building." Discussion followed and a further motion for a vote by [written] ballot was defeated.²⁴ Bill Mason moved that the committee add cost estimates and return to the congregation for further consideration. A motion to recommit the proposal back to committee carried.

On May 16, the Remodeling Committee again reviewed the plans in detail and presented a total cost estimate of \$393,016 including about \$56,000 to raise the pulpit and choir and build the baptistry. The conference was opened for questions and several persons spoke to the issue. The motion of the committee passed.

After the plan was approved, an unexpected quiet developed within the congregation concerning the renovation. 1982 was the low point in the recession gripping the economy and many were worried about the ability of the church to pay for the extensive work. The budget for 1982 totaled \$145,554, an increase of 8.7% and including \$14,800 for debt retirement. By late April, receipts were running \$4,979 behind the church's needs and obligations. Even more disturbing was a sharp decrease in attendance in worship. While Sunday School numbers were consistent, worshippers declined from the mid 300s in mid-winter to the mid-to-low 200s after Easter. Was this seasonal or an unwelcome trend? Summer statistics revealed the usual doldrums with Sunday School attracting about 150 and worship about 200. Nevertheless, good things were occurring. The youth attended a New Life Singers Concert in July

²⁴ The Church Conference Minutes are unclear relative to the vote on the substitute motion. It must be assumed that it, along with the motion for a ballot vote, was defeated.

and a Youth Evangelism Conference in August. Youth and adults went to Camp Caswell for music week. The congregation participated in the offering for World Hunger in August.

The difficulty, of course, was financing the renovation. The Finance Committee contacted members who had not made a commitment "so we might know what to expect and so that we can make satisfactory financial arrangements."²⁵ The effort was clearly low-key. Pastor Ford mentioned the drive in *Chrysalis* messages but without extravagant emphasis. For Commitment Sunday on September 12th pledge cards were mailed to every member asking for a three-year plan of giving beyond one's regular budget offering. In the midst of this campaign, the congregation contributed \$1,468 to combat hunger in Haiti through the purchase of egg-laying chickens for poor families. On September 12, new pledges for the renovation came to \$54,195 for a grand total of 74 families committing \$199, 008 to the three-year effort.²⁶ Equally welcome was the return of the congregation from summer vacations and family trips: on September 4th, 375 worshipped together and almost that many on following Sundays. The year rushed to an end led by the Thanksgiving service shared by congregations of the community. Then the Advent season arrived, bringing candles, the hanging of the green, the Lottie Moon Christmas offering, a Christmas drama staged by the youth, and White Christmas gifts for the needy.

The new year of 1983 began on a positive note. Dr. Ford commended the congregation for its record giving for the past year, despite the ongoing national recession: a total of \$177,970 including \$22,050 for the remodeling and \$9,400 for designated offerings.²⁷ The Remodeling Finance Committee recommended that the congregation either sell \$300,000 in church bonds or borrow that amount from a bank. A discussion in the Board of Deacons led to a presentation to the congregation by Thomas Corts in February, outlining a bond plan whereby \$300,000 could be borrowed at 11% and repaid over 15 years with annual payments \$41,444.²⁸ Bank financing was also available but probably at 13% or higher interest rate, given the prime rate at the time of 10.5%. To many members, neither option seemed feasible. A motion

²⁵ Roy N. Ford, Jr. *The Chrysalis*, May 19, 1982.

²⁶ *The Chrysalis*, August 18, 25, September 1, 8, 15, 1982

²⁷ Roy N. Ford, Jr., *The Chrysalis*, January 5, 1983.

²⁸ Minutes of the Board of Deacons, Special Meeting, January 16, 1983.

was presented to “delay the work that the Remodeling Committee has done on the renovations of the church for the moment,” that we “proceed with work that is really necessary in this church as we have monies available,” and that “we put forth a real effort to have a Building Fund in this church.” After discussion the entire matter was referred back to the Deacons for further study.²⁹

While the Deacons worked during the spring months, church life was normal. The women prepared covered dishes for Wingate’s international students, January Bible study explored I Peter, and the Home Mission offering targeting assistance to local non-English-speaking congregations exceeded its goals. At Easter, the choir presented “Gethsemane,” an Easter cantata, and the following week the congregation hosted Helen Friedman of Charlotte’s Temple Israel for an information session on Jewish worship and customs. The pastor’s spring discipleship class culminated with the baptism of eleven children as new Christians: Tim North, Todd Hayes, Bobby Myers, Tommy Dupree, Shannon Edwards, Jacqueline Hinson, Lori Braswell, Donna Maye, Amy Shadrick, Tina Young, and Christy Ward.

In April, the Board of Deacons returned a reformulated remodeling plan on a “pay as you go basis” with a Phase I plan for necessary exterior repair to roof, windows, and exterior doors, including storm windows throughout at a cost of \$40,000. The estimate was later raised to \$43,000 to include an access ramp rather than an electric lift into the rear of the annex. The congregation adopted the recommendation.

After two years of outstanding service to the youth, Bob Lowman departed for Golden Gate Baptist Seminary, receiving heart-felt thanks from the young people, the congregation, and the staff. Lynn Cox accepted the position of summer worker with the Wingate youth. Dr. Ford attended the Southern Baptist Convention with misgivings about the current rise of more conservative leadership and its efforts to alter the direction of boards and agencies through presidential appointments.

As I left Pittsburgh, I came home believing that the rightward movement in the Convention continues. The Convention is growing more conservative and will continue to do so. I came home consoled by the knowledge that our church and others can continue to be who we are. We can support the mission effort and use the literature that suits our need. One good thing is that Southern

²⁹ Church Conference Minutes, February 6, 1983; *The Chrysalis*, February 9, 1983..

Baptists have autonomy in the local church, and I rejoice that we do not need to follow the way of others.³⁰

July was designated "Building Fund Month" to gather the remainder of the \$45,000 for Phase I of the renovations. Progress was made, but the total reached only \$34,000. New exterior doors and storm windows were installed and the access ramp into the sanctuary was finished. Another important project was completed when a committee chaired by John Fulgham thoroughly revised the Constitution and By-Laws. The congregation approved the document with minor further revisions, giving the church a firm foundation for efficient and correct operational procedures.³¹ In the fall, the congregation initiated an Adopt-A-Student program to strengthen the connection of college students and the church. Members invited students into their homes for occasional meals and fellowship so that they would feel more comfortable in participating in Sunday School and worship. The congregation celebrated Reformation Day, remembering Martin Luther and his contribution to our Protestant heritage. Thanksgiving gave way to an Advent affirmation of hope, joy, peace, and love. The spirit of Christmas was much evidenced by contributions to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions and to Loaves and Fishes, the Sharing Station, and Crisis Assistance Ministry to meet local needs. The Sixty-Plus group visited McAdenville for their renowned display of Christmas lighting. In the year's final Church Conference, the congregation engaged architect Charles Hastings to finalize plans and specifications for Phase II of the renovation.³² Christmas came on a Sunday and the congregation worshipped through carols, children describing a toy just received, the proclamation of the Word, and Communion.

The year 1984 began with the usual resolutions, a successful Men's Day coordinated by Tom Lowery, and youth activities that included a progressive dinner and plans for a winter weekend at Ridgecrest. The economic stress of the period surfaced in the Lottie Moon offering total of \$4,042, short of the \$5,000 goal, even though gifts were received through January. The March Annie Armstrong offering, extended to mid-

³⁰ Roy N. Ford, Jr., *The Chrysalis*, June 8, 29, 1983.

³¹ *The Chrysalis*, August 24, 1983.

³² *The Chrysalis*, December 18, 1983.

April, totaled \$1,839 of the \$2,000 goal.³³ Failing to meet these goals was a rare event in Wingate Baptist history. Each month the Cassette Ministry and Visitation Committee reported its activity in the newsletter: for April, the committee made 55 visits to members of the congregation and another 59 in May. The Youth Puppet Show under the leadership of Lynn Cox, gave performances at various local churches and at Guardian Care Nursing Home. Dr. Ford returned from the Southern Baptist Convention distressed at the clear political undertones he discerned and particularly with the resolution regarding the ordination of women.

The resolution opposing the ordination of women as pastors and deacons runs counter to an old Baptist respect for the local congregation. I take comfort in our heritage which lets us continue our practice, and lets us ignore convention resolutions. Our greatest treasure remains the freedom that a congregation holds. By upholding that freedom, we remind our Convention of its heritage and treasure.

In the following newsletter, the pastor questioned whether our highly prized diversity could survive when it seems that the conservatives "...no longer trust the local churches to decide what practices they will follow. I see the resolution as part of a continuing effort to impose practices and beliefs because trust has faded."³⁴

In the May Church Conference, the congregation voted to proceed with Phase II of the renovation which included addition of rest rooms, central air conditioning units, reworking the heating system, updating electrical equipment and work in the basement at a cost not to exceed \$138,350. Work was to begin when half of the cost was in hand, amounting to \$69,175 and requiring additional gifts of \$42,441.³⁵ However, contributions lagged and questions were still being asked, leading to an August polling of the congregation.

While awaiting the results of the poll, the congregation learned that Carolyn Gaddy's history of the congregation was nearing completion with a printing of 750 copies scheduled at a cost of \$7,951, to be recovered through the sale of books.³⁶ A very inspiring revival in

³³ *The Chrysalis*, January 25, April 18, 1984; Annual of the Union Baptist Association, North Carolina, 1983-84, p. 72-3.

³⁴ Roy N. Ford, Jr., *The Chrysalis*, June 20, 27, 1984.

³⁵ *The Chrysalis*, June 6, 20, 1984.

³⁶ *The Chrysalis*, August 29, September 5, 1984.

September was led by Dewey Hobbs, beloved former pastor, complete with special meetings for prayer and covered-dish meals.

Now we live in the afterglow of the Revival. Dewey Hobbs provided us some excellent leadership with his preaching and personal style....If revival has enduring meaning, it will become plain as we go about our normal activities of study, fellowship, music and worship. We have a call to take up our hoe handle and to till the Lord's fields in Wingate and Union County. We have the task to make disciples, to baptize and to teach.³⁷

When the survey of the congregation was tallied, with 190 members participating, 17 preferred to build a new church, 62 favored remodeling according to the original plan and 111 (58%) voted only "in favor of cosmetic work (paint, carpet, etc)." In accord with this vote, the Deacons recommended in church conference:

1. That the prior action of the church concerning Phase II of the Building Renovations be rescinded.
2. That the Deacons be authorized to proceed immediately with cosmetic treatment to the church buildings as deemed appropriate; said work to include, but not necessarily be limited to, painting and carpeting.³⁸

The motion passed and Phase II was completed over the next several months.

Not everyone was happy with the cosmetic facelift, but most did not wish to shoulder a financial burden in uncertain times. Many other aspects of church life were proceeding well. The season of Advent included two special events: announcement of the gift of a new organ to grace the worship, through the generosity of Mrs. Effie Helms. And *The Saturday Before the Second Sabath* arrived in print in time for the celebration of the church's 175th anniversary year. On Christmas Eve, the congregation celebrated Communion in remembrance of Christ's incarnation in Jesus' birth.

Before considering the anniversary celebration, several aspects of ministry which developed slowly over several years need topical elaboration. The first of these is the role of women in the diaconate. During the Everette Chapman pastorate of the late 1970s, the Wingate Board of Deacons recommended that the congregation consider electing

³⁷ Roy N. Ford, Jr., *The Chrysalis*, September 26, 1984.

³⁸ Church Conference Minutes, October 14, 1984; *The Chrysalis*, October 10, 1984.

women to the diaconate. The church without opposition elected Elaine Kirkman as a deacon and ordained her in the manner customary to that ministry. The following year Carolyn Gaddy was named Sunday School Superintendent, the first women to hold these positions of leadership in the congregation. Baptists traditionally have welcomed females in roles as Sunday School teachers, directors of music, youth and mission programs, and dozens of other tasks in the congregation. But many have balked on women as deacons, using certain New Testament passages as a basis for female subordination in all questions of leadership over men. Clear limits on gender existed in a majority of Baptist churches, but not in Wingate Baptist.

The Wingate congregation was clearly in step with the times. In almost every aspect of modern society, women were winning ever more important positions of leadership. Judge Suzie Sharp was appointed to the North Carolina Superior Court system by Governor Kerr Scott and elevated to the North Carolina Supreme Court by Governor Terry Sanford. In 1974 she became the first popularly elected female chief justice in the nation. Three years later Isabella Cannon of Raleigh became the first female elected mayor of a large city in the nation. By 1979 in the North Carolina General Assembly, 22 of the 170 seats were held by women.³⁹ Those opposed to female leadership tolerated these advances of individual women 'because she thinks and acts like a man.'

Under Dr. Ford's ministry, Carolyn Gaddy, Alice Coleman, Frances Crooke, and Gladys Hinson were elected to the Diaconate. Each proved a valuable addition to the Board, though some noted the propensity of the body to name the incumbent female as Secretary rather than Chairman. A few years must pass before that final barrier also fell. By the eighties, no hesitation was evident in congregational voting. Would the church next ordain a woman to the clerical ministry or call her to its pastoral staff? The faithful service rendered by Elaine, Carolyn, Alice, Frances and Gladys in this period essentially answered that question for a large part of the congregation.

A second initiative of the Chapman ministry was the Deacon Family Ministry Plan. For more than 150 years the Wingate Board of Deacons served as the business executive committee of the congregation. They reviewed and recommended to the church in

³⁹ H.G. Jones, *North Carolina Illustrated 1524-1984*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983, p.426.

conference matters of policy, personnel, and operation. Early in 1977, Reverend Chapman invited a Charlotte pastor whose church had implemented the deacon ministry plan to lead a board workshop on the idea of the deacon as a lay minister. In October a plan was developed by assigning each family in the church to a deacon who would assist the pastor in spiritual ministry in times of crisis. Each deacon had about twelve to fifteen families. Some deacons visited in homes, sent cards on special occasions, and visited in the hospitals. Others were slower to gain confidence in their own abilities as lay ministers and without doubt some families were neglected.

Through the 1980s, this responsibility was assumed in addition to the traditional deacon role as executive manager of the congregation's business. But the ministry idea was slowly catching on. Under Dr. Ford's leadership, the new and rather shaky program improved with frequent attention to orienting new deacons including those who had served on the board under the old business model. Frequent board discussions and especially the sharing of successful experiences strengthened the entire board as they learned to deal with the opportunities offered in family ministry. Clearly some laity learned more quickly than others but the ministry plan gained momentum in the early 1980s and strengthened the personal attention available to the congregation in times of crisis and of peace. Yet at the end of the decade, deacons still dealt with both the business operation and problems of the congregation. This study will revisit the maturation of the Deacon Family Ministry Plan in later times.

Thirdly, the congregation appreciated Dr. Ford's worship leadership during the early eighties. His sermons were timely and based firmly on the Bible. He preferred to highlight a contemporary problem and then use Biblical resources to address the circumstances. Frequently, the pastor used the front page of *The Chrysalis* to stimulate congregational thought in preparation for the coming sermon. For example, Dr. Ford wrote:

Someone has called ours the age of anxiety. There is much that makes us anxious—nuclear weapons, double-digit inflation, rising divorce rate, more crime, and the political unrest in Poland. There is anxiety over our jobs, our children, and our church. Telling us to stop being anxious does not help.

Yet, Paul writes: "Have no anxiety about anything...." Here we come to some counsel in the Bible that is better than we can practice. But the Bible does contend that faith overcomes anxiety.

This Sunday our worship will focus on a Christian's response to anxiety.

Join us as we struggle to affirm faith in the midst of unbelief.
Philippians 4:4-7⁴⁰

On other occasions, Pastor Ford addressed difficult Biblical questions openly:

When I read the Bible, it is easy to read it and expect certain things. Then, I hit a passage that leaps at me from the dark. Such is the case with the story of the Canaanite woman. She comes to Jesus and asks him to heal her daughter, and he meets her request with silence. When she persists, he asks if he should give the children's bread to the dogs.

I tend to see Jesus as loving and kind, but here are these words and reactions. It helps to realize that the woman was not Jewish but a non-believer. And the story says something because in the end this non-believer is praised for her faith.

On Sunday, we shall consider faith as it applies to people who live outside the church.

Matthew 15:21-28⁴¹

Fourthly, Wingate was blessed with faithful service by staff members. Upon the resignation of Woodrow Funderburke as Minister of Music in June 1980, the Personnel Committee examined the needs of the church in this area. They recommended Ronald Bostic, a Wingate faculty member, to become Minister of Music in 1981. He has continued to serve faithfully in that capacity to the present. Also in 1980 Ann Williams began her long tenure as organist for countless services of worship, weddings, and funerals, sharing beautiful music on both organ and piano. The young people enjoyed summer and part-time ministers, most of whom were students at Wingate College. Bryan Presson served in summer 1980, Bob Lowman became year-round in 1981, Lynn Cox in 1983, and Karla Lowman in 1985.

The Wingate congregation always encouraged candidates for the ministry within its membership to prepare themselves for service in the Christian faith. In 1981 a scholarship was awarded to any member enrolled full-time in study for a theological degree. The award was renewable for three years and completely canceled if the student was serving in the ministry two years after his/her graduation from the

⁴⁰ Roy N. Ford, Jr., *The Chrysalis*, January 28, 1981.

⁴¹ Roy N. Ford, Jr., *The Chrysalis*, August 26, 1981.

seminary. Several Wingate College students who were members of the congregation, as well as some from within the church family, received this assistance for their theological education. It remains available for the future strengthening of the Christian ministry.

Finally, the financial contributions of the congregation to missionary causes were exemplary during the early 1980s. Even when budget needs were scarcely met, the church gave faithfully to the Cooperative Program of the Baptist State Convention and always reached a little deeper for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions, the Annie Armstrong Offering for Home Missions, the Gideon Society for Bible distribution, and the offering to combat World Hunger. A harbinger of change appeared in 1981 when the budget was amended to divert 6.04% of the Cooperative Program gift directly to Wake Forest University. Wake Forest had for many years been held in special regard as the flagship of Baptist Higher Education in North Carolina and several children of the congregation had attended that institution. The school discerned a change in the theological tenor of North Carolina Baptists, and especially within the denominational leadership. The denomination was becoming more conservative with a fundamentalist element rapidly gaining power and nearing control. Wake Forest asked to be released from the covenant relationship of the past and to elect its own trustees in return for ceasing to share in the distribution of Cooperative Program contributions. When the covenant was dissolved, the Wingate Church continued to give its share directly to Wake Forest even as it wondered what the future would bring. Would the conservative trend that had captured the Southern Baptist Convention and revolutionized Southeastern Baptist Seminary now continue to grow in North Carolina? It was a sobering thought.

Without a doubt, conservatism was on the rise in every aspect of American life. At the national level, Ronald Reagan won the presidency in 1980, basing his campaign upon conservative ideas that had worked in California. In North Carolina, Union County's own Jesse Helms was rapidly gaining fame in the United States Senate as "Senator No" based on his negative votes against Democratic Party sponsored legislation. He was first elected in 1972 as a part of the rebirth of North Carolina Republicanism and served a total of thirty years. Even the Union County Board of Commissioners evolved slowly from a twentieth century domination by local Democrats, to a bipartisan board and finally to a Republican instrument of government.

The year 1984, and indeed all the early eighties, contained both signs of encouragement and evidences of retrenchment. Nevertheless, 1985 dawned and the congregation was 175 years old. It was time to celebrate and to remember. The steering committee spread the celebration over a three-month period and all the living former pastors agreed to participate. Ernest Lee, descendant of a Meadow Branch founder and the Wingate College director of drama, composed historical sketches to highlight significant experiences in the Meadow Branch history. It seemed that everybody was on a committee of some kind but the task was a breath of fresh air. On January 13 the congregation dedicated Carolyn Caldwell Gaddy's *"Saturday Before the Second Sabith:" The History of the Meadow Branch-Wingate Baptist Church 1810-1984*. Soon the church was immersed in its rich past. A "Moment of History" entitled "The Brush Arbor" dramatized the early years, followed the next week by the service of worship led by L. Eugene Walter, pastor 1965-72. Another drama explored "Jacob, A Man of Color Becomes a Member of the Church." In March the congregation welcomed former pastors Everette H. Chapman (1973-78), David K. Shelton (1946-49), and Walter E. Sanders (1949-53). April began with "The Woman's Missionary Society of 1914" and continued in worship with J. Dewey Hobbs (1954-64). The climax of the celebration began on Saturday night April 20 with a dramatization of the church's history "And They Made the Welkin Ring." On Sunday morning, the congregation sang "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name" and confessed in prayer:

Lord, forgive us when we forget the greatness of our heritage. At times, we find it easy to take credit for all the good things that are happening in our lives. Help us to remember the foundation of faith that has been provided by the saints who have gone before us. Help us as we seek to follow Jesus in our day. Forgive us, O God, when we fail to remember, make us aware of our need for Thee and one another, and help us to be aware of our responsibility for the generations that follow us. We pray in the name of Jesus, the Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The hymn "The Church's One Foundation" set the stage for William C. Link, Wingate pastor 1941-45, whose inspiring message and Prayer of Thanksgiving concluded the worship. In the afternoon the congregation dedicated a new Allen electronic organ given by Effie Helms in memory of her husband, J.B Helms and his parents Mr. & Mrs. T.K Helms. The Recital of Dedication was performed by Dr. Martha Secrest Asti, Assistant

Professor of Organ at Wingate College. The anniversary celebration was a grand success; it inspired and enriched the Wingate congregation.

During the celebration, the church received on loan for display from Mrs. Grace Flowers, a Bible which had once belonged to Alfred Culpepper Davis. He supplied the congregation as pastor for a period and was the son of Edmund Lilly Davis, pastor of Meadow Branch, 1856-1896.⁴² The Bible is currently displayed in a cabinet in the Fellowship Hall along with other historic items associated with the early history of the congregation. In early May, several church members spent the day in Charlotte working on a Habitat for Humanity house, a new initiative designed to provide housing for the poor. Peter Larrimore, Phil Loudermilk, Jim Young, Robert Young, and Roy Ford dug footings for a house and later Roy was accompanied by Edwin Bagley, Art and David Holder, Jim McCoy, Jim Parrish and Robert Young in raising the trusses. "It was work, mission, and witness....It was a good day."⁴³ Under this program, houses were built with volunteer labor, and usually cost from \$20-\$30,000. Low income buyers repaid the principal over a long period with no interest, based on the Biblical admonition (Exodus 22:25) not to exploit the poor by charging interest when money is loaned to them.⁴⁴ Habitat will become an important aspect of Wingate local missions in the coming years.

The enthusiasm of the anniversary celebration could not cover for long the troubling opinions that were beginning to surface within the congregation. Nine months earlier, in the September 9, 1984 Deacons meeting, Dr. Ford and members discussed "things that were happening in our church: loss in attendance, lack of commitment, loss of church membership, no gain in new members. [Dr.Ford] asked what the trouble is and what we need to do about it. Discussion ensued. Very significant problems exist—an undercurrent that is not good." The conversation continued in October, but the minutes contained no detail: "Dr. Ford again brought up the problems of our church. Much discussion! Bill Stover led closing prayer."⁴⁵

The Wingate church was not alone. Among mainstream American Protestants, the signs of stress were ominous, with decreasing

⁴² Carole Williams, *The Chrysalis*, March 13, 1985.

⁴³ *The Chrysalis*, May 8, June 12, 1985.

⁴⁴ Roy N. Ford, Jr., *The Chrysalis*, April 10, 1985.

⁴⁵ Minutes of the Board of Deacons, September 9, October 7, 1984.

membership and attendance, lowered budget receipts, and fewer candidates for the ministry. Conversely the more conservative Christian bodies were growing. In some places mega-churches with far-reaching ministries flourished. The most widely read interpretation of the trend studied by most professionals was Dean M. Kelley's *Why Conservative Churches Are Growing*.⁴⁶ His thesis was simple. In time of personal crisis, Americans search for theological meaning which will assist them to make sense of their world. A personal crisis can be a disrupted family, the death of a loved one, or the approach of one's own death. Those who search for meaning are attracted to others who make similar discoveries within their personal world. New religious groups form. These religious movements initially expect firm adherence, perhaps even sacrifice of status or possessions. Those who join a strict religious group feel they are different from other humans. They are "saved," they are included in God's kingdom while others are still outside. Conservative churches clearly trumpet the character of their expected future.

Conservative churches grow faster than more liberal churches, but their rapid growth increases the difficulty of maintaining the strict belief system. More and more adherents join the group but some fail to uphold the required strict beliefs and lifestyle. If these new members remain in the group, the conservative church loses its distinctive character and becomes more mainline, re-interpreting the Christian message within general religious patterns and without strong beliefs and strict behavior expectations. Most sociologists believe that mainline Protestantism will finally disappear into the fabric of American social humanism.

Of course, the question for the Wingate Baptist congregation in the eighties was even more complex. In relation to American Christendom, Wingate Baptist was clearly conservative, advocating a radical message of redemption through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ and mandating Christian living. But among Baptists of the South, Wingate was more moderate if not liberal in its understanding of the Biblical message and the mandates of discipleship. So, could the Wingate congregation survive and be the church of Jesus Christ without being captured either by cultural Christianity or by the conservative

⁴⁶ Dean M. Kelley, *Why Conservative Churches Are Growing*, New York: Harper & Row, 1972.

criteria of membership inflation and financial prosperity which characterized the local fundamentalist mega-churches?

To some extent the problems of waning growth were endemic to the time. Churches nationwide faced increasing competition from secular activities; Sunday lost its differentiation as blue laws disappeared from most urban areas. In 1982, over 54% of North Carolinians were affiliated with 56 different denominations. Baptists were the largest with over a million members, but in 1981 the Baptist State Convention reported the first actual decrease in membership in its 151 years of existence.⁴⁷ Likewise, Sunday School attendance declined, and small sects and store-front gatherings attracted those seeking intimate groups. Billy Graham continued to be the leading evangelist of the age, a world-renown personality conducting vast national crusades around the world. Television preachers, both within the established churches and others promoting an independent allegiance, enabled a kind of participation valuable for shut-ins and convenient for those who preferred no local attachment. In short, the problems of the Wingate Church in the mid-eighties were shared by many Christian churches and many Baptists in North Carolina. But whether the malady was national or local in character, Wingate statistics confirmed a distressing situation. Between 1979 and 1985, resident membership declined from 599 to 501 (-16%), Sunday School enrollment from 434 to 299 (-31%), and attendance from 200 to 153 (-22%). Every year the church lost more members than it gained. Yet contributions rose from \$161,908 to \$260,516, (+61%; adjusted for inflation, +31%).⁴⁸ The core membership of the church was solid and the few were giving almost one-third more of their resources than five years earlier. The problems could no longer be ignored.

Within this context, members of Wingate Baptist Church were asking questions. Why are we losing members? What has happened to Christian commitment? Pews are not full, prayer meeting is poorly attended, and every year we hear that we are once again behind on budget needs. We need a revival!

In May, the Board of Deacons dedicated its meeting to this topic. Dr. Ford suggested a committee of six to conduct "an in-depth study of

⁴⁷ Jones, *North Carolina Illustrated*, p. 430.

⁴⁸ "The Shrinking Value of the Dollar."

our problems (which do exist)."⁴⁹ The Deacons explored several alternatives, and decided that "they would serve as a committee and put a notice in this week's newsletter asking people to say what they think the big problem is for lack of church growth." *The Chrysalis* appealed to church members:

This message is to inform church members that the deacons are beginning, with some help, a comprehensive study of the problem or problems facing our church today, and we'd like some input from you. We aren't talking about our building or material things. We're concerned about the slow, but steady, decline in membership, in church attendance, and in the spirit of our fellowship. Surely, something is amiss. What is it? What steps do we need to take for improvement?

Many of you have spoken to us from time to time and we've tried to listen. On next Sunday, we shall give you a chance to tell us in writing what you think would help, and what you consider to be our chief problems and strengths. Without signing your name, just tell us what you think is wrong and what you think is right, so that we may begin trying to improve our church.

It is your church too! With your ideas, help us to improve it, so that we may grow!

If you cannot attend Sunday's conference, please send your input within the week to Chairman George Gerding, or hand it to any of the deacons.

This input will help us determine the direction our church is to take in the future.⁵⁰

A special Board meeting reviewed the returns which were heavily critical of the pastor, leading the Board to engage Bill Treadwell of Charlotte as a church consultant to study our circumstances and conflicts for three months.⁵¹ Treadwell met with the Board on June 2, suggesting a workshop on problem solving and general reflection on I Corinthians 12-13 in order to answer these questions: "Are we one body? Do I want my way or God's way? How does this body function? Do I feel in a group that's together? Do I respect all parts of this body? How does Chapter 13 speak to this problem?" At the July Board meeting, Dr. Ford presented a plan for addressing the problems of growth in the congregation:

1. We propose to set a goal of increasing our worship attendance by 12-15% over a period of a year beginning September 1, 1985....

⁴⁹ It is unclear whether the parenthetical addition came from Dr. Ford or was inserted by the Board Secretary.

⁵⁰ "Important Message from Deacon Board," *The Chrysalis*, May 8, 1985.

⁵¹ Minutes of the Board of Deacons, May 5, 12, 19, 1985; *The Chrysalis*, May 22, 1985.

2. Set the same percentage as in #1 for Sunday School attendance.
3. Propose emphasis on Wednesday prayer meetings with a meal and time of fellowship once a month.
4. Give the deacon family ministry plan more attention so that each resident member is visited once a year by a deacon. Deacons would continue to lead the fellowship on Wednesday evening and contact families in crises. Also have a deacon retreat annually.
5. Propose a mission project, either Community or Habitat for Humanity, or other worthwhile ministry.⁵²

The proposals were further refined and circulated. On September 8, the Church in conference, with Jerry Surratt presiding as Moderator Pro Tem, discussed the proposals and amended them to include support of the current pastoral leadership for the year of effort to revive the growth and vitality of the congregation. The amendment passed. Two separate motions to table the matter were defeated. Opinions expressed for and against the proposal were not recorded in the minutes. In a written ballot vote, 58 members voted to accept the proposals and current leadership for one year and 98 voted against the amended proposal.⁵³

Dr. Ford considered this action to be a vote of no-confidence in his leadership, prompting his offer to resign at the end of September if the congregation would provide a severance package. The Church accepted the resignation and approved a six-month continuation of salary and benefits.

In many ways, Wingate Baptist prospered under Dr. Ford's leadership, especially in its gender awareness, lay ministry, and respect for the admission criteria and practice of other Christian Churches. He encouraged giving to support missionary ministry and feeding the hungry. He introduced the congregation to Habitat for Humanity and advocated an active participation. And for those advances, Wingate Baptist was a stronger church. But in the minds of many the remembered vitality of earlier times had eroded. Clearly, a majority of the congregation believed that a change of leadership would restore the harmony and strengthen the viability of the Wingate Church.

⁵² This unpolished version is preserved in the Minutes of the Board of Deacons, July 25, 1985. It is the only version discovered to date. The proposals were rephrased and distributed as seven items to the congregation in a letter from the Deacons, August 26, in preparation for the September 8 Church Conference. The letter was referenced in the conference minutes but not included. The amendment was Item 8.

⁵³ Church Conference Minutes, September 8, 1985.

So in the Baptist way, the congregation addressed immediate needs. In October, they elected a Pastor Selection Committee chaired by Bill Mason and including Corinna Bivens, Jim McCoy, Jerry Thomas, and Carole Williams. The Committee named Jerry Surratt, Professor of Religion and History at Wingate College, as interim pastor. The interim lasted for eleven months and was noteworthy primarily by the congregation's involvement with the Union Baptist Association on the question of the church's procedure in the admission of new members.

Some detail on this development is necessary. For most of its existence, the Meadow Branch/Wingate Church admitted members on profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, followed by baptism by immersion, unless prevented by disability or threat to the health of the candidate. That procedure was altered in 1981 during Dr. Ford's ministry and incorporated into the Constitution and By-Laws. Article One outlined the requirements for membership in the congregation: "Anyone professing faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, and adopting the views of faith and practice held by this church, together with its covenant and constitution, may be received into membership in this church." A candidate presented himself/herself in one of the following ways:

- A. By profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and for baptism by immersion
- B. By promise of a letter from another Baptist church
- C. By promise of a letter from another Christian church providing that membership in that church required profession of faith and baptism in some form
- D. By statement of prior conversion experience when a letter is not obtainable
- E. By Spiritual Watchcare [for students at Wingate College]....⁵⁴

Dr. Ford believed that this change was a significant step forward for the congregation: we have affirmed "that the Baptist way of baptizing people [occurs] when a person comes on profession of faith, and we declared that we share a common faith with all Christians when we agreed to accept people from other Christian churches."⁵⁵

But a few years later in 1985, Wingate was in a pastoral interim and fundamentalist Baptist pastors of several churches in the Union

⁵⁴ Appendix, Carolyn Gaddy, *"Saturday Before the Second Sabath...."* p. 151.

⁵⁵ Roy N. Ford, Jr., *The Chrysalis*, September 16, 1981.

Association raised questions concerning Wingate's association membership since it did not require immersion baptism. On request, Dr. Surratt explained the congregation's policy and its rationale at the Association meeting as follows: 'Wingate Baptist affirms the necessity of profession of faith and baptism and acknowledges that the New Testament meaning of baptism is immersion. But Wingate also interprets all modes of baptism as symbolic of the washing away of sin; thus Wingate honors other baptisms besides immersion providing the candidate also makes a public profession of faith. Wingate changed its policy in 1981 in full awareness of its departure from tradition but in accord with its belief in the autonomy of the local congregation to follow its conscience on the matter. Wingate values its membership in the Union Association and hopes to maintain that relationship.'

After that explanation, Dr. Surratt invited the Association to send representatives to speak with individual members to confirm our understanding of the policy. The Church in conference reviewed the matter and reaffirmed its manner of receiving members according to the 1981 By-Laws.⁵⁶ In February, Association representatives made an official visit, talked with several deacons and members, and indicated that no decision would be made until October. The committee reported to the Association in October and the more conservative element attempted to oust Wingate and First Baptist, Monroe. By that date Wingate had a new pastor.

About the same time, the Wingate Church requested the Union Association to send a committee to examine Bobby Lee Lowman, Jr., a candidate for ordination to the Christian ministry. On December 17, the committee gave its approval and on January 5, 1986 Lowman was ordained. Both Bob and wife Karla had served as ministers to Wingate youth and were much loved within the congregation. The couple was entering seminary to complete their preparation for service.

In June of 1986, the Pastor Selection Committee recommended Reverend Mitchell Simpson, currently completing his doctorate at Florida State University, to be called as the pastor of the Wingate congregation. Rev. Simpson and his family visited Wingate the weekend of July 19-20, and at the conclusion of Sunday worship the church extended to him a call. Mitchell and wife Betty moved into our community in mid August; he filled the pulpit for the first time on August 24.

⁵⁶ Church Conference Minutes, November 10, 1985.

CHAPTER NINE

THE LATE EIGHTIES: TILLING NEW SOIL

The long interim served to calm the congregation. Most people were hopeful that Dr. Simpson could recapture the enthusiasm and unity-with-diversity that had characterized the Wingate Baptist Church of earlier years. While the problems of the past did not disappear during the interim, Mitch brought new energy and the personality of a fellow pilgrim who believed that God could work his wonders in this congregation again if given the opportunity. Dr. Simpson seemed like a pioneer farmer faced with a dense forest, believing that with God's help he could clear the trees, grub the stumps, plow the roots out, and make a field ready to produce a harvest of grain. Then God would empower this people again and make them servant-disciples of his kingdom. As America finally came to trust Ronald Reagan, so Wingate came to trust Mitch Simpson, slowly at first, but increasingly as confidence was reborn.

To properly recreate the 1980s, the historian must allow the circumstances and the material to shape the narrative. The early eighties for the Wingate Church was a time of retrenchment, doubt, and difficulty; it has been portrayed in large part as an extension of the surrounding secular culture where economic problems were formidable and leadership was uninspiring. Even the wider church history of the time was full of arguments over declining mainstream churches and the rise of mega-churches which frequently only copied the success-formula of modern society—"if more people come, we must be doing it right." Thus Wingate Baptist Church history revolved around Board of Deacon minutes, Church Conference confrontations, and ever weakening statistics.

However, that is not the character of the period beginning in 1986 and continuing to the present. With discernable momentum building, the historian must integrate more of the flow of events within the church itself and the increasingly active involvement of the membership. While we will continue to consider the political, social, and economic context, it seems not so influential. Now the church truly becomes the people, not the physical plant where people come to sing and pray. To be sure, Wingate will continue to renovate and build anew, but properties now have a newly perceived purpose—enabling a people of God to worship within beauty and sanctity, to study the Bible in order to deepen understanding of the gospel, and to fellowship over tables of food while

designing missions to fulfill the church's calling in this place and in the world.

First we must survey the context for the latter half of the 1980s. After enduring years of misguided or weak leadership in the White House, Americans began to appreciate that Ronald Reagan was more than a cowboy movie actor. By his second term he had earned the title "The Great Communicator" because his conversational speeches seemed sincere and addressed the needs of the common man in America. Following Vietnam under Johnson, Watergate under Nixon, stagflation under Ford, and hostages in Iran under Carter, Reagan seemed like a breath of fresh air, gradually raising the level of trust in national leadership. Sometimes he bumbled, but he seemed an honest, realistic negotiator in international politics. Reaganomics did not create prosperity, but the fiscal ship no longer seemed to be leaking so badly.

Despite his tendency to view international crises as movie scripts in which the solution only awaited the astute director, Reagan made a number of correct decisions and his popularity gave him a landslide victory in 1984. But problems continued to plague him. Arms went to Iran and funding to the Contras in Central America in an under-the-table deal, but somehow Reagan remained clear of implications. American society was threatened by drug addiction, homeless people on urban and small town streets, and a pandemic called AIDS. Millions of school children watched teacher Crista McAuliffe wave as she entered the *Challenger* space shuttle in 1986. Televisions were installed in classrooms so Crista could give a live lecture to the children from outer space. A gasket failed, destroying not only the shuttle and all aboard, but also the dreams of children who watched the disaster.

Reagan's advocacy of the "StarWars" missile defense system, though completely beyond the technological and economic capability of the United States in that period, frightened the Soviet Union into trying to match our ambitious plans. That effort, coupled with the Soviet defeat and embarrassment in Afghanistan, toppled not only the Berlin Wall in 1989 but also the entire Soviet Union in 1991. Former President Reagan was hailed as the successful "Cold Warrior" who beat the "evil empire." It was the stuff of movies.

With Americans generally satisfied with Presidential leadership, Mitch Simpson had an advantage over his immediate predecessors as Wingate pastor. On September 28, congregation and pastor pledged a

covenant together and Dewey Hobbs blessed the relationship with his installation message.⁵⁷

Still the first order of church business in 1986 was once again the continuation of physical plant renovation, now largely on a “pay as you go” basis. These later phases added some final touches in the sanctuary, a new roof for the educational facility, and new ceilings, lighting, carpeting, and furniture for the basement classrooms. The church authorized spending up to \$20,000 including short term borrowing if necessary and contributed over \$12,000 in an October special offering.⁵⁸ The congregation also approved a policy on the use of church facilities whereby church groups could schedule facilities with the secretary to avoid conflicts, while outside groups must submit their requests to the Board of Deacons. Church families desiring to use the fellowship hall for showers, receptions, and other occasional events would schedule with the secretary on a first-come basis and be responsible for clean-up of the hall and kitchen facilities at the event’s conclusion.

The Union Baptist Associational meeting for 1986 returned to the issue of baptism as practiced at Wingate and First Church, Monroe. The discussion was reported as “spirited” with some local churches who accept members only my immersion advocating separation from these non-conforming congregations. From his report, the Wingate church discovered in Mitch Simpson a clear but soft-spoken candor that cut to the heart of an issue:

Throughout the discussions, I was bothered by the pious language being heaped upon our two churches by folks who kept reminding us how much they loved us, how much they wanted to maintain fellowship with us, and how they were so sorry it had to come to this...but that if we didn’t straighten out our act, they wouldn’t have anything to do with us. Never mind the fact that our two churches were charter members of the association, and provide some of the most dedicated leadership to the programs of the association. Their mouths kept saying one thing, but their tone and their mannerisms were saying something entirely different. Listen, I know when I’m loved and when I’m not. May the Lord save us from those who love us so much they want to get rid of us!⁵⁹

⁵⁷ *The Chrysalis*, September 24, 1986; Worship Guide, September 28, 1986.

⁵⁸ Church Conference Minutes, September 14, 1986. The Prime Rate was 7.5% at that time, so short term borrowing was more reasonable, probably about 9% annually. *The Chrysalis*, October 15, 1986.

⁵⁹ “The Bambi Doctrine,” *The Chrysalis*, October 30, 1986.

The motion to exclude Wingate and First, Monroe from the Association failed to pass. The Wingate church and its pastor pledged to concentrate on the call of God to deliver a message of reconciliation to the world.



Mitchell Simpson

Thankfully other more positive events occurred. The Music Ministry received a significant gift from the estate of Miss Kate Griffin and a memorial by Mildred Griffin which purchased a grand piano for the sanctuary, dedicated to the memory of Kate Griffin. Among the five new deacons elected in November, 1986, were Frances Crooke, Gladys Hinson, and Elaine Kirkman, strengthening the increasing role of women in Wingate's lay ministry. The proposed budget for 1987 contained modest increases in missionary giving and operational programs. With debt service, the receipts increased just over 12% to \$293,933.

In late 1986, deacons reviewed the strengths and weaknesses of the Deacon Family Ministry Plan and took steps to insure that no family was overlooked. In the Board's January meeting, Pastor Simpson again articulated the vision of deacons as lay ministers among the congregation. According to the 1981 By-Laws, the Church Council now conducted the business of the church even though records showed that the deacons had not fully relinquished that responsibility. Under Mitch's leadership the Board recommitted itself to the ideal of a servant ministry, now a more comfortable role. In the newsletter, he wrote:

In recent years...Baptists have begun to reclaim the Biblical heritage of "servant-leaders," that beautiful model of servanthood which Jesus himself so fully endorsed, and which he both taught and practiced among his own disciples. The stirring account of his bathing the feet of his followers is precisely the truth he labored to establish: those who are considered "first" in the Kingdom of God are to place themselves "last" in the power struggles of humanity. They are to serve others, not wield power over them.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ "Deacons: Boards or Ministers" *The Chrysalis*, January, 15, 1987.

Study sessions helped deacons with listening skills, the use of prayer in visits, and means to avoid prying. Later sessions targeted bereavement and coping with unusual or prolonged illnesses.⁶¹ These efforts proved to be the successful ingredient in the development of the lay servant-ministry within the Wingate Diaconate. In a later summary of the Simpson ministry, the congregation affirmed that "in the last four years the Deacons have been led to believe that they must accept the 'servant' role in ministering to the needs of the congregation...while the Church Council has been urged to assume leadership in the business affairs of the church."⁶²

All new developments, however, were not inspirational. For a year, the Wingate church had been mulling the implications of a denominational decision to cease using Annie Armstrong Home Missions offerings to support any church which chose a woman as its pastor. Mitch Simpson, speaking for himself and not the church, "called upon the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention to reverse its unfortunate, discriminatory, sexist decision, and to freely support by prayer and monetary means the high calling of ministry which God confers on male and female alike."⁶³ Yet the pastor encouraged the congregation to give to this worthy cause: Wingate met its 1987 Annie Armstrong Offering goal of \$2,000.

Mitch attended the inaugural meeting of the new Southern Baptist Alliance in May, 1987 and discovered new hope for the future: "As we worshiped, prayed, and sang together, I was reminded of the old spirit of annual meetings of the Southern Baptist Convention, before the days of brazen, aggressively ignorant shallow pietism and its precinct-politics style of intimidation tactics."⁶⁴ He continued later in questioning whether Baptist quibblings are of importance in God's kingdom and ended by saying:

I think it does matter to God that his followers encourage an open and honest exchange of ideas about Him. I believe God's great freedom-loving heart does grieve when indoctrination replaces education. I believe Baptists at their best have historically...defended the priesthood of believers as their birthright from a God who sets people free and opens their minds. Therefore,

⁶¹ Minutes of the Board of Deacons, January 11, March 1, and May 5, 1987.

⁶² "Things We Will Remember," Order of the Morning Worship, August 12, 1990.

⁶³ "Sad Times for an Old Friend," *The Chrysalis*, March 5, 1987.

⁶⁴ "Back Home in the Southern Baptist Alliance," *The Chrysalis*, May 27, 1987.

in spite of myself, I believe that the transformation of the Southern Baptist Convention does matter to God....⁶⁵

When Mitch and Betty marked their first anniversary of service in Wingate, they acknowledged many blessings:

In twelve months, you have allowed us into those sacred places of your heart, granting us access to the celebrations and hurts of your lives. We have laughed uproariously with you, wept with you when death came to your families, celebrated your young people's marriages and waited in hospital corridors for God's healing and perfect peace. We have thrilled at new life and healthy babies born, and wept for joy over our own expected miracle of autumn.

We have prayed for the Spirit to come and touch our spirits and mold us into a community of faith that is teachable and available to be "messed with" for the sake of the Kingdom. The Spirit has answered in evidences too deep for words, and will be limited only by the boundaries we allow to persist in our hearts.

It's not that we are miraculously new people, but that we are opening ourselves to a miraculous Power that has been there all the while, willing to draw us nearer to its unspeakable presence. Neither you nor I can really imagine what great hopes exist for us together as the church, for who knows but what we have come to the Kingdom for just such a time as this?⁶⁶

A new surge of momentum began to appear as summer became fall. In January Mitch had prepared the field for the sowing, focusing on the Sunday School:

Our Education Committee and teachers in the adult division are working to better organize our Sunday School ministry, whose reason for being is effective Biblical studies and outreach to encourage others in their study of the Word. We have excellent teachers who diligently prepare to "rightly divide the Word." What we lack is an organized departmental approach to Sunday School work. Given our resources and leadership, we should be reaching 500 people weekly through classes of Biblical study.⁶⁷

Jane McCoy became Sunday School Director in the fall, developing a Sunday School Council to plan the program and guide its implementation. They recognized a "Teacher of the Month," organized a "Sunday School Worker Appreciation Banquet," scheduled High

⁶⁵ "Losing Arguments," *The Chrysalis*, June 4, 1987.

⁶⁶ "Has It Been a Year Already?" *The Chrysalis*, August 15, 1987.

⁶⁷ "The 'State of the Church' Address," *The Chrysalis*, January 29, 1987.

Attendance Sundays, and held an annual Sunday School Picnic in September at the college lake. The Council sought to reach and enroll every member of the church in a Sunday School class.

In September, the congregation heard a pastoral challenge that Christian stewardship is based on the Biblical idea that "of those to whom much is given, much is required." Proper stewardship embodies all we are and have, including our money. The "catch-up" offering met and surpassed expectations.⁶⁸ Soon thereafter services of renewal began, led by Dr. Findley Edge, Professor Emeritus of Religious Education at Southern Seminary in Louisville, focusing on the calling to Christian education. Edge advocated that Sunday School teachers have often "functioned out of 'ought to' motives, instead of from the overflow of gratitude and dedication authentic faith brings."

This Sunday morning, September 27, our worship hour will include a commissioning service for all Sunday School teachers. At the conclusion of the service, we will ask the teachers to come forward and kneel, giving the rest of us the opportunity to bless them and dedicate their teaching efforts, as we celebrate that revered Biblical form of blessing, the laying on of hands.⁶⁹

The Church Council received a report from the Properties Committee on Stage IV of the renovation. Individuals representing various committees and aspects of the program raised questions, discussed ideas, and introduced new possibilities. The pastor described the event as a warm, caring exchange of creative suggestions which always maintained an awareness of the larger mission of the congregation. "We sense among ourselves a powerful Spirit, ready to lead us as far as we are willing to follow in Christ's name. In order to serve and teach others to minister alongside us, we need the facilities and the worship setting to allow the dreams fruition."⁷⁰ In October the church heard the plans for improving the Day Care facilities, expanding upstairs Sunday School classrooms for the Adult I department, the fastest growing segment of the church, and sanctuary renovation to relocate the baptistry under the pulpit where it could be viewed from all parts of the church. The former baptistry area was prepared for the new grand piano given to the church in memory of Miss Kate Griffin. The piano and the

⁶⁸ "Well Done, and Here We Go...", *The Chrysalis*, September 9, 1987.

⁶⁹ "Sunday School...The Right Way," *The Chrysalis*, September 23, 1987.

⁷⁰ "Letting the Church Be the Church," *The Chrysalis*, September 16, 1987.

organ would then frame the pulpit and the choir loft. The congregation in conference approved the plan, along with an authorization to borrow up to \$90,000.

In October, the congregation approved participation in the "Overground Railroad," a program to assist refugees from oppressed Central American countries to resettle permanently in Canada. Jim McCoy, Gene Morgan, and Jim Edwards developed a plan for a two to six-month period in Wingate during which the church provided housing, food, transportation, and medical attention at a cost of \$875 per month.⁷¹ The first couple to receive Wingate's assistance was Carlos and Ana Marquina in 1988. Later, soon after they arrived in Alberta, Canada, a letter back to Wingate communicated emotions beyond words and grammar:

Brothers in Jesus Christ, we just write you all, because we want to express our gratitude with you. Thanks for being supporting our problems and our sickness. First, thanks to Dr. Simpson, the pastor and the congregation, for being accepted us, as their guests. Thanks to grandma, Mrs. McConnell for being treating us like her own grandchildren. Also thanks to Mr. McCoy, Mr. Morgan, Mr. Fletcher, Mr. Hogan, Mr. Smith, Mrs. Bivens, Mrs. Holder, Mrs. Braswell and their spouses for been ridden us to the school. Thanks to the Karim family, and all the people who in one or another way helped us. Once again, thank you very much for being so nice, and for encouraged to continue. We're very pleased with the Baptist C. and our hearts will be here for ever. God bless you all.

Very truly, Carlos and Ana⁷²

Periodically, the Marquinas exchanged news with various members of the congregation, maintaining the long-distance relationship.

The election of Deacons in November allowed the pastor to reemphasize the new emphasis in that Christian lay ministry. The newsletter copied his letter to the nominees:

How honored you must feel, to have been considered by your fellow churchmen for the role of deacon, the servant-ministry role which undergirds the pastoral ministries of Wingate Baptist Church.

⁷¹ Church Conference Minutes, October 11, 1987, *The Chrysalis*, October 8, 14, 1987.

⁷² *The Chrysalis*, February 15, 1989. (Note: Carlos and Ana may not have been the first refugees supported by the church but are the first ones specifically named in the existing records.)

May I remind you that the New Testament role of leadership is not one of power and control, but of servant leadership. We at Wingate Baptist have affirmed that the diaconate is to function in that tradition, not as business managers or financial officers but as loving fellow-ministers functioning in the basic caring skills which Jesus taught his first disciples.

Your willingness to serve as deacon is a commitment to a life of prayer, visitation, and crisis ministry. You will be entering into a new life of training in caring skills and fuller commitment to your own personal devotional discipline. As a deacon, you will be directly responsible for 15 church families in the Deacon Family Ministry Plan. You will be their direct link to the nurturing watchcare of our church. In addition you will be an invaluable part of our Outreach ministries, as you concentrate on touching the lives of the unchurched in our area.

The ministry of deacon is a great honor and a tremendous responsibility, which will bring you again and again to your knees in prayerful petition for the gracious strength of our Lord, Jesus the Christ...without whose reconciling Spirit our ministries are impossible.

May the Grace and peace of our Risen Savior bless your service in His name.⁷³

With December came Advent candles of expectation, White Christmas packages to be distributed by Loaves and Fishes, the choir's proclamation of "Nine Lessons and Carols," and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

Calendar year 1988 was a time of significant change. It started with the mid-year graduation of Carol Story from Wingate College. Carol served the congregation as Minister to Youth for two years, following in the footsteps of several significant students: Bob Lowman, Lynn Cox, and Karla Lowman. Increasing *Chrysalis* space dedicated to youth activities proved that the Wingate Baptist young people were not just the children of members, but contributing members themselves in missions and activities of Christian discipleship. Esther McSwain, daughter of a Baptist minister and Wingate student, immediately accepted the challenge of continuing this strong ministry.⁷⁴ Helen Helms, long-time church secretary and clerk, retired as Church Secretary after 23 years of service but consented to remain as part-time Financial Secretary and Church Clerk. Glenda Spivey joined the staff as Church Secretary.

Phase IV of the renovation was completed in February. A special offering gathered almost \$4,000 toward the near \$90,000 cost and

⁷³ "The Reclaiming of the Ministry," *The Chrysalis*, November 11, 1987.

⁷⁴ *The Chrysalis*, January 6, 1988.

another \$33,000 was pledged in May. Provisions were already in place to borrow the additional funds. The pastor attended the second annual session of the Southern Baptist Alliance at Mercer University. In the newsletter, he summarized the covenant principles of the organization, revealing a marked difference with the current direction of the Southern Baptist Convention. The Alliance commits to the freedom of the individual to read and interpret scripture, the freedom of the local church under the authority of Jesus to shape its life and mission, call its leadership, and ordain those gifted for ministry, male or female. It affirms the larger body of Christ, expressed in various Christian traditions and promotes cooperation among believers. It commits to the servant role of leadership, following the model of Jesus. The Alliance advocates theological education in congregations, colleges, and seminaries with reverence for biblical authority and respect for responsible scholarship. It preserves the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus and the calling of God to repentance and faith. The Alliance believes in a free church in a free state and opposes any effort by either to use the other for its own purposes.⁷⁵

Another congregational group re-made itself in this decade. Senior church members known as the "Sixty-Plus Club" had in earlier years traveled in every direction from Wingate, visiting new places, seeing new sights, and thoroughly enjoying the fellowship of the group. But with the deaths of some and the aging of others, the travel bug waned and only Anne McConnell and Mildred Griffin held the club together. In 1988, Jane & Ken Murray and Joe & Edith Larrimore led a renewal of the group, recruiting Baron & Bessie Smith, Benson & Corinna Bivens, Charles & Eula Ross Bivens, Bob & Betty Griffin, Bob & Linda Isner, and S.J. & Jean Little. Through a re-naming contest, the Sixty-Plus Club became the "Good Timers."⁷⁶ More modest travel occasions were supplemented with beneficial programs on Medicare and Living Wills, birds, flowers, and music. Artists and musicians from Wingate College shared their talents and good times were enjoyed by all, enriching the lives of these faithful members.

The congregation dedicated the newly re-located baptistry, gifted to the church by Selma Matheson. Three candidates were baptized: Barry Glass, Amanda Goodwin, and Shannon Crisp. In July, the

⁷⁵ "When Through Fiery Trials..." *The Chrysalis*, March 9, 1988.

⁷⁶ *The Chrysalis*, March 16, 1988.

congregation in conference created several new standing committees to assume responsibility in Baptist Affiliations, Christian Life, Family Life, Public Affairs, Youth Ministry, Church Constitution & By-Laws, and Public Relations. Under the leadership of Helen Cowser, the Church Library was moved into the Sanctuary building. Art Holder and volunteers built new library shelving in the old Ladies' Parlor and the collection was moved and strengthened, especially in the children's area. The Library opened before and after Sunday services and on Wednesday night. In November, the Diaconate was increased from 15 to 18 members, with six being elected each year to a three-year term. This increase further strengthened the Family Ministry Plan by lowering the number of families that each deacon served. Early the following year, the new Church Council assumed responsibility for managing the church's business matters.

The June Southern Baptist Convention solidified the control of the fundamentalists and signaled to many moderates that other alternatives must be sought. While Pastor Simpson grieved at the Convention's directions, yet he saw new hope in the emerging Southern Baptist Alliance. He announced his intention to attend the Alliance national convocation in September:

I hope to attend, and I would love to be in the company of others from Wingate Baptist Church, because we as a church community have been given much, and there is much we should give in return. We are no ordinary, luke-warm congregation clinging to denominational sacred cows, and our heritage demands that we seize the moment and move beyond the pitiful excesses of the last ten years of denominational strife into a future symbolized by the actions of those [Alliance] folk in that packed ballroom that night.

You see, our parting act was not one of frustration or fear. Rather, we sang those enduring words of a great hymn of faith which was itself composed in a time of personal loss and anguish:

"When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul."

There are great days ahead for those willing to risk them.⁷⁷

In the summer, the Baptist Affiliations Committee, composed of Corinna Bivens, Tom Crooke, Linda Isner, Jane Murray, Joe Larrimore, Don Merrill, Martha Rainey, Esther McSwain, Baron Smith, and Carolyn

⁷⁷ "Where do Moderates Go from Here?" *The Chrysalis*, June 30, 1988.

Gaddy, with Jim McCoy, Edna Morgan, Jack Barnes, Jane McCoy and Mitchell Simpson *ex officio*, accepted the responsibility to review the external relationships between the congregation and Baptist bodies at various levels. Even though some of these connections had existed for more than a century, many recognized that the trend of the Southern Baptist Convention toward fundamentalism was accelerating. Leaders in the southwestern states, especially in Texas, increasingly sought election to positions of power. Seminaries in various sections tended to reflect local Baptist thinking--Southwestern and New Orleans were more conservative while Southeastern and Southern were more moderate. The Boards of the latter two gradually received more and more conservative voices; Seminary Presidents were sought among the conservative set, and finally both institutions purged moderate and liberal minded professors from the faculties. Moderates also disappeared from positions of influence on the Home Missions and Foreign Missions organizations. And despite the faithful work of the Women's Missionary Union in local churches throughout the United States, the role of women in missions was closely regulated by a male-leadership philosophy. In North Carolina, the change was slower but the state convention gradually moved toward more conservative administrators and staff. When Wake Forest University and Meredith College modified their covenant relationship they gained the right to name their own Trustees in exchange for forfeiting their long standing share of Cooperative Program receipts. Other Baptist schools, including Wingate, began to allocate funds received from the Baptist State Convention away from current operating budgets, lest an unexpected withdrawal of money should compromise the institution's vitality.

During the fall, the newsletter became an instrument of re-educating the congregation. Members of the committee attended regional and state meetings dedicated to exploring new alternatives. These individuals composed short essays for the *Chrysalis* on their experience, convictions, and hopes for the future. Some revealed their grief at the death of the Southern Baptist Convention that many had known from childhood. Others concentrated on the future and how we might join with like-minded Baptists to recreate an organization dedicated to missions and mindful of the historic principles that have guided Baptists for centuries.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ *The Chrysalis*, September 14, 21, 28, October 5, 12, 20, 26, 1988

The Affiliations Committee presented its first report to the congregation in a letter from Chairman Baron Smith on November 22, 1988, including the following summary of the changes in the Southern Baptist Convention:

1. A finely-tuned political machine coordinated by Paul Pressler of Houston and Paige Patterson of Dallas has succeeded in their stated objective of “going for the jugular vein of the Southern Baptist Convention,” by coordinating ten years of electing fundamentalist presidents at the annual meeting of the SBC. These men, in turn, have now completed their ten-year objective of dominating the appointive boards and agencies of the SBC.
2. The Home Mission Board in Atlanta, once a progressive voice in missions activities in the U.S., has withdrawn financial support of any church choosing a woman as its pastor. Under the direction of recently-appointed fundamentalist president Larry Lewis, the Board now refuses to appoint as missionaries any divorced person. Most recently, funds raised through the Annie Armstrong Easter offering for Home Missions have been diverted and misused to underwrite an Evangelism conference of leading fundamentalist preachers.
3. The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, our Washington voice for religious liberty and a watchdog organization over Congressional legislation regarding separation of church and state, has come under attack for not embracing the narrow agenda of the Religious and Political Right. Their budget was decreased by \$48,000 during the annual meeting of the SBC in San Antonio last June, and current SBC leadership is endeavoring to completely withdraw the remaining \$400,000 in annual Southern Baptist support.
4. Southeastern Seminary, our own North Carolina representative of the six SBC seminaries, has experienced a “hostile takeover” by fundamentalist trustees appointed during ten years of fundamentalist SBC presidents. The widely-respected president of Southeastern Seminary, Dr. Randall Lolley, was forced to resign along with Dean of the Faculty Dr. Morris Ashcraft. Mahan Siler, pastor of Pullen Memorial Baptist Church, Raleigh, who had served as an adjunct professor at Southeastern along with his wife Janice, was dismissed last month by trustees who disagreed with his teaching of ethics and pastoral care. The method of his dismissal completely circumvented faculty and administrative protocol.
5. The Christian Life Commission, traditionally a shining light of progressive leadership in the area of Christian ethics, has been transformed into a right-wing agency less concerned with Biblical issues of hunger and peace with justice than with a narrowly-defined abortion agenda that refused to acknowledge even the rights of women victimized by incest and rape.
6. The Foreign Mission Board, once the jewel in our Southern Baptist crown of missions work on a global scale, has also fallen to the narrow confines of a fundamentalist view of missions. Most recently, the Board has decreed

that all missionaries, including those specifically trained in such areas as medical missions and music ministry, must now give a minimum of 70% of their time to a fundamentalist-style confrontational mode of evangelism, complete with yearly quotas for numbers of persons converted per missionary. Persons closely connected with Wingate Baptist Church are being hurt and even forced to resign or retire early from the mission work to which God called them....⁷⁹

The letter concluded by exploring the circumstances of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina which at this time continued to resist the fundamentalist take-over. Moderate leadership was re-elected by convention messengers by a 61/39% margin. Members of the local committee attended meetings of the newly formed Southern Baptist Alliance in Nashville and its North Carolina chapter in Raleigh to determine whether its prospective might more closely align with that of the Wingate Baptist Church.

In October, the committee now chaired by Tom Crooke, recommended that the Church continue to support state missions with 65% of our budgeted Cooperative Program giving but that the remaining 35%, which earlier went to the national convention, be escrowed until the church determined the desired distribution of these monies. A second recommendation of the Committee urged support of the Southern Baptist Alliance with a minimum of one dollar per resident member. Both recommendations passed.⁸⁰ The Wingate Baptist Church at this point maintained membership in two national Baptist bodies. Another year of study, discussion, and reflection was necessary in order to determine the church's future relationships.

Early in 1989, the momentum of the Wingate Church gained strength as good things began to occur in various areas of ministry. The newly formed Church Council held a planning retreat at Camp Caraway. Deacons further strengthened the Family Ministry Plan. Ann Stone joined the staff as director of the DayCare ministry in June. Several of the Good Timers attended a retreat at Caraway, including Ruth Broome, Grace Flowers, Mildred Griffin, Edith & Joe Larrimore, Anne & Bill Stover and Mary Williams. The WMU began collecting donated supplies for the

⁷⁹ Letter of the Affiliations Committee, Baron Smith, Chairman, to the Wingate Baptist Church, November 23, 1988, attached to the Church Conference Minutes, December 4, 1988.

⁸⁰ Church Conference Minutes, December 11, 1988; *The Chrysalis*, December 7, 14, 1988.

Union County Turning Point Shelter. Mitch struck a responsive chord with his study of Jesus' parables during the adult section of Vacation Bible School. He was expecting 10-12 regular participants but averaged almost 30. Several commented on the rewards of the more casual approach with time available for more commentary and discussion. Mitch commented:

Perhaps this week with the parables has won a few more believers into what mid-week worship and Bible study are all about...By the way, we will continue the study of the parables throughout the Wednesday nights of the summer....On the other hand, maybe you've been willing to sit through an hour of Bible study this week just to get to the blueberry pie and coconut cake....⁸¹

Something must have worked. A year later Mitch again announced his plan to teach adults in VBS Bible study. The invitation concluded: "Refreshments will be served."

Meanwhile, Sunday School workers attended leadership training at Caraway. The new Long-Range planning committee undertook to study "Who we have been? Who are we now? Where are we going?" The committee hoped to build on foundations already established and discover "a vision for this church that is not content to float along on self-satisfaction and tradition." Mitch summarized his three years of ministry in Wingate succinctly:

We have matured together as a church. My basic themes as proclaimer and pastor have included servant ministry, the priesthood of all believers, Baptist distinctives like the competency of each person in matters of faith and the primacy of local autonomy in church polity. In worship, we have stressed both the transcendent awe before God that underlies all genuine praise and supplication, and the importance of a warm-spirited heart language in prayers, hymns, and sermons.⁸²

An exciting new initiative was announced by the Southern Baptist Alliance: the establishment of a new theological seminary in Richmond that was to be

a cooperative ministry among Southern Baptists, Northern Baptists, Black Baptists, and Presbyterians. The purpose of the school is to train men and women for the gospel ministry. One of its side-effects will be to symbolically

⁸¹ "From the Pastor's Desk," *The Chrysalis*, June 14, 1989.

⁸² "From the Pastor's Desk," *The Chrysalis*, August 23, 1989.

bridge the chasm created in 1845 when Baptists of the South withdrew cooperation from their sister churches in the North, in defense of the evil cultural cancer of slavery....No longer are we content to bemoan the mean-spirited fundamentalism that reigns supreme in our Southern Baptist Convention. Now we have turned our back on political skirmishing for denominational power. Now we are back to the proper business of being the church. Now we face the fresh, strong winds of our future as Baptist Christians no longer content with the narrow-mindedness that has diverted our attention this last sad decade.⁸³

In the fall, opportunities multiplied. The congregation welcomed to its Autumn Revival Dr. Bill Treadwell of Myers Park Baptist in Charlotte. Hal and Grace Daniels' gift to the music ministry purchased a set of Choir Chimes for the children. Musical tones resonated through the choir rehearsal area on Wednesday evening, and soon within congregational worship. Bill Nash and his College Ministry Committee recommended an "Adopt-a-Student" program to strengthen bonds between college students and local families. The program also extended to Wingate Baptist youth who attended other colleges.

On Thursday/Friday September 20, 1989, the Carolinas and Wingate felt the power of nature in Hurricane Hugo. On Sunday the town still had no power, yet the congregation gathered for worship in a darkened sanctuary:

Fellowship was the abiding tone of Sunday morning, in the most literal sense that we were all "fellows" bonded by common disaster and danger. Was it my imagining, or did our hymns ring with an extra power and recognition of God's mercy? And did you, like I, find yourself caught up in the beauty of the choir's anthem, as they gathered informally around the piano?

As I stood to proclaim the Word, I felt the overwhelming sense that there before me sat many of the dearest friends Betty, Andrew, and I know, and that present in our midst was the Lord who brought us together in the first place and who is even now doing great things among us.

It is altogether appropriate that Hugo's wrath made the videotaping of Sunday's worship impossible, for moments so rare as those live best in the spirit's memory, far beyond the literalist ability of picture and sound reproduction to emblazon truth upon our hearts. Sunday's worship, like Hugo's fury, had to be experienced to be appreciated.⁸⁴

⁸³ *The Chrysalis*, March 8, 1989.

⁸⁴ "From the Pastor's Desk," *The Chrysalis*, September 27, 1989.

On Pastor Appreciation Day, marking the third year of the Simpsons' ministry in Wingate, Carolyn Gaddy wrote: "we thank you both, as we thank our God that you have come our way. We are grateful for the material evidences of our progress but more grateful that you have led us to a deeper appreciation and fulfillment of our own individual commitments to do God's will in this church and in our own lives."⁸⁵ A week later, Mitch described the Sunday School Commissioning Service:

I believe last Sunday in our church family comes much closer to what may be possible for a church on mission than the gaudy excesses of church growth specialists. We took the time to dedicate our teachers of scripture, our Sunday School teachers, by the deliberate words of our dedication litany and by the Biblical tradition called the laying on of hands, thus blessing them for their tasks of ministry through the Word.⁸⁶

As the fall season advanced, the congregation again faced the question of denominational affiliation. According to Pastor Simpson, many in the church were dismayed that Wingate's mission gifts were being used by the SBC to

underwrite reactionary political motives which Wingate Baptist Church could not with integrity affirm. Particularly were we alarmed at the giant steps backward that had been orchestrated by the national fundamentalist leadership: stifling restrictions on theological education, abuses of pastoral power, denigrating of women to second-class Christian citizenship.⁸⁷

By late 1989 a new national Baptist body was in place: the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, child of the Southern Baptist Alliance. The escrowed funds from the previous year were designated through CBF to support World Hunger Relief, Missionary Families, Women in Ministry in North Carolina and Christian Education through the Divinity School at Wake Forest University.⁸⁸ The Pastor reflected on this decision:

Advent for me this year reached its zenith in our church business conference last Sunday, when we took courageous steps to counter the present darkness that threatens thinking congregations like Wingate Baptist....The decisions were not made without effort, without pain, without genuine grief, for they present

⁸⁵ Carolyn Gaddy, *The Chrysalis*, October 4, 1989.

⁸⁶ "Your Pastor Writes," *The Chrysalis*, September 27, October 4, 1989.

⁸⁷ "From the Pastor," *The Chrysalis*, December 6, 1989.

⁸⁸ Church Conference Minutes, December 6, 1989.

honest grappling with that age-old battle: the battle of fear-driven religious orthodoxy against the very Truth that will eventually make us free....I commend you for facing, in this Advent season of waiting for the Light, the dark and persistent attempts in our Baptist life during this past decade to stifle intelligent, service-based churchmanship. Nowhere is that adversary more ominous than in the pain of facing what the Southern Baptist Convention has become at the top.⁸⁹

With this action, the Wingate Baptist Church terminated its contributions to the Southern Baptist Convention and did not send messengers to subsequent annual meetings. A nominal dual membership was maintained for a time, but each year the connection of the congregation with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship became stronger. The church watched ever more anxiously the direction and leadership of the State Baptist Convention, hoping to maintain its fellowship with the Baptist Churches of North Carolina.

November was a special Thanksgiving season for the congregation. The church celebrated many blessings in its ministries. Some members had given a day of labor to clear the church property of Hugo damage and donated the wood to families for winter heating. Women collected donations for Loaves and Fishes to assist Union County's needy and invited Wingate's international students to dinner and conversation. GAs sold doughnuts, giving the proceeds to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. The church budget was only slightly behind, and the congregation had raised thousands more to rapidly reduce the building debt. By late November, the total remaining debt stood at \$2,623. A new budget was pledged at \$254,000 for 1990. The Handbell Choir added joyful tones to the "Hanging of the Greens," and during Advent Pastor Simpson reminded worshipers of two expectations of the time: the coming of the Christ child and the promise of his ultimate return to claim his disciples for eternity. As the New Year dawned, Mitch's pastoral letter captured the mood very well:

Dear fellow ministers of Wingate Baptist Church,
Grace to you, and peace, through Jesus the Christ!

As we begin our fourth calendar year together I am writing my initial pastoral letter of 1990 to thank you for what our church is becoming and to encourage you toward deeper servant ministry.

⁸⁹ "From the Pastor," *The Chrysalis*, December 13, 1989.

We begin this year healthier than in a long while, both in spirit and in financial stewardship.

Spiritually, we continue our dual emphases upon thoughtful, creative worship and Biblically-based study and fellowship. Since 1986, we have stressed Jesus' servant model of leadership, the women and men of our diaconate leading by example in their ministries among you. Thank you for embracing anew those distinctives of Baptist Christians, especially an insistence upon religious liberty, the competency of each person in matters of the soul, autonomy of the local church, and the integrity of church-state separation.

Liturgically, we continue to explore the richness of the Christian year as it mirrors the life and ministry of our Lord. We have just celebrated Advent and Christmas with all the dignity and reverence those seasons deserve, and now we enter into Epiphany's pensive searching, vigilant for those "Aha!" moments of the Spirit's breaking into your everydayness.

Further evidence of our spiritual health is the work of our Long Range Planning Committee. These folk have their priorities ordered correctly and have begun a re-examination of our mission as a church. Unless I miss my guess, this year will see big dreams emerging from that committee, and big dreams always call for courage and hard work!

January is the inaugural month for our Baptist Men's organization, led by Don McIntyre. Don serves as a consultant with the Baptist Men's organization at the State Convention level, and brings to his task considerable energy and resources. If ever the men of our church are to accept the challenge of personal missions, this is the year.

Spiritual renewal is nowhere more evident than in personal giving attitudes, for hearts touched by Christ's tender mercies cannot refrain from giving sacrificially to God through his bride, the church. You have every right to celebrate your stewardship of the year just past:

You met and exceeded an ambitious budget figure, giving nearly a thousand dollars over the proposed budget. The final tally projects a surplus \$7,500 available to apply on the Building Fund for the new year!

While you were meeting and exceeding the goals of our Ministry-Action Budget, you were also retiring the debt carried forward from our church-wide renovations. Over the last three years, you have contributed \$130,000 for that work, and the result is an attractive worshipful setting for the church to do its work.

We are a growing church, and we must look to the needs of Christian Education in our congregation. For years, Wingate Baptist Church has needed an additional staff person to coordinate Christian Education ministries, and as your over-extended pastor I urge you to devote earnest prayer toward those needs. There is no more critical area of unmet ministry potential in our church.

In many ways, you have exceeded my expectations as a congregation ready to get on with the Kingdom work. I have from the first day of our time together been persuaded that you and I were led to each other by God's gracious will. I have felt no lessening of that covenant call, and I stand willing to

serve as your under-shepherd in whatever direction God leads this church. Will you covenant to do the same?...

Your pastor and fellow servant, H. Mitchell Simpson⁹⁰

With this kind of commendation and challenge, the confidence of the church rose noticeably. Mitch inspired the people to reach beyond themselves and become the church which had remained dormant in recent decades. He wrote:

We are growing as a church in ways easily measureable and in ways more subtle and abstract. Through the ministry of our deacons, the goal-setting and coordination of our Church Council, the focus of our Sunday School for teaching and small-group fellowship, and our emphasis upon corporate worship and outreach, we are intent upon the substance of faithful growth and not its mere form.⁹¹

The next step was to embrace the Great Commission without reservation and become disciples in the neighborhood and in the world. In 1990, Wingate Baptist Church was ready for that challenge and collectively shouldered the yoke of Christ. They knew that the yoke of Christ rested easy--because it was made to fit.

In January 1990, the Baptist Men's Fellowship was revitalized under Dr. Simpson's urging and the leadership of Joe Larrimore, Bob Doak, Jerry Thomas, Dale Dupree and Mike Chudalski. At monthly breakfasts the body was nourished by bacon & eggs and the soul by information on church and local projects which needed male support such as Habitat for Humanity, North Carolina Baptist Disaster Relief teams, and the Underground Railroad. The Women's Missionary Union under the leadership of Edna Morgan and Edith Larrimore continued to honor its watchword: "Laborers together with God" with six groups of women praying, studying, supporting, and doing missions locally and around the world. The WMU sponsored Wingate College student missionaries, supported Loaves and Fishes, Turning Point and the Crisis Center, as well as leading the congregation in its contributions to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering. The Mary and Martha Sunday School class solicited favorite recipes from the congregation for publication in the Wingate Baptist Church

⁹⁰ Preserved in "Events in the Life of Wingate Baptist Church, 1985-90," History Committee, Carolyn Gaddy, Chairperson, Unpublished Mimeograph Pamphlet, p. 11-13.

⁹¹ "From the Pastor's Desk," *The Chrysalis*, February 7, 1990.

Cookbook, with proceeds to assist in the renovation of the church kitchen. The effort was led by Adelaide Clawson, Alice Coleman, Myzelle Fletcher, Carolyn Gerding, Linda Isner, and Ruth Trull.

The Youth Ministries had made steady progress during the late eighties. A number of dedicated and energetic youth leaders from the college led a mostly summertime program: Carol Story, Esther McSwain, Lynn Moss, Keith Murray, Kristi Wilkins and Philip Capps. These talented workers planted the seeds of Christian mission activity which would bear fruit for years to come. But the church discerned that the program needed continuity from year to year. David Sherwood was called as the summer youth minister in 1990. In July "TeenTalk" in the *Chrysalis*, David invited his group to assist at the T-Ball Tournament Concessions on Friday night, attend a Christian contemporary music concert at Belk Tonawanda Park on Saturday, and hinted of coming information on Carowinds...a Beach Retreat...Volunteer Opportunities! Youth trips and retreats emphasized spiritual growth, service to others, and the pure joy of young people having good times together. It was not a surprise when the church called David to be the year-round Minister to Youth. To that challenging position David brought energy, enthusiasm and lots of love to a critically important age group. His faithful service continues to the present.

The Adult Handbell Choir, which frequently enhanced the congregation's worship experience, participated in the NC Baptist Handbell Festival at Providence Church in Charlotte. The choir trip included Barbara Coleman, Jean Loudermilk, Carole Williams, Alison Sligar, Heather Chudalski, James & Shayne Hall, Steve & Kim Etters, Polly Bostic, David Sherwood, and Director Jane McCoy. On Palm Sunday the Adult Choir presented "Hear Us, Holy Jesus: Meditations on the Passion and Death of Christ," opening a week of community services in conjunction with Wingate United Methodist Church. In May, all the choirs-- Music Makers, Young Musicians, Youth Choir, Adult Choir and Handbells—made presentations at a Wednesday night service in the sanctuary.

In late June, Ann Stone submitted her resignation as Director of the DayCare in order to pursue a certification in Special Education. Before her departure, however, visitors from the NC Department of Human Resources made their annual evaluation of our program. "We received an excellent rating on our inspections, in particular we were commended on the excellent quality of care that the children are given and the fact that the children are so happy....Our day care has much

potential. Please pray that God will bless this ministry and it will continue to provide support and care for families.”⁹²

The Stewardship Committee, chaired by Jerry Thomas, challenged the congregation to increase its giving in support of both local and worldwide ministries. The Renovation and Properties Committee reported that work on the physical plant was complete for the present, the bills were all paid, and the debt was practically gone. The renovation cost a total of \$203,185.⁹³

Riding high on spiritual momentum and sensing that further advance required careful thought and planning, the congregation responded to Dr. Simpson’s suggestion in January that the church study and rearticulate its mission as a Church of Jesus Christ. He argued:

In most American churches...most church members, if they are honest, cannot describe for you the mission of their church or the goals toward which the church reaches, beyond some vague platitudes of bland catch-phrases...Is it any wonder that over one-half of Union County residents are not involved in any meaningful Bible study or regular worship attendance? Many of our churches have no idea where they are headed, so why should anyone be inspired to join with them.⁹⁴

Adult Sunday School classes, Deacons, Church Council, and the Long-Range Planning Committee spent time in Biblical search, conversation, debate, and writing. The task began in Sunday School with a search for biblical models of purpose for Christ’s church in I John, Luke/Acts, Hebrews, and several of Paul’s letters and moved to articulation of ideas the following Sunday. These rough mission statements were used to develop a final wording. On April 22, the Church in Conference accepted a new “Statement of Purpose:”

We, as a Body of Believers in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, do unite as Wingate Baptist Church in a Mission to:

WORSHIP GOD and CELEBRATE the redeeming love of Christ through the forgiveness of sin.

PRAY for the guidance of Holy Spirit.

WITNESS in the spirit of Jesus as we minister to the needs of others both within and beyond this Fellowship.

⁹² Ann Stone, *The Chrysalis*, June 27, 1990.

⁹³ This writer’s calculation, based on the sums authorized on four phases of renovation by the Church Conference.

⁹⁴ “Your Pastor Writes,” *The Chrysalis*, February 14, 1990.

STUDY and TEACH God's Word, as written in the Holy Bible, to keep it alive as a guide to daily living.

GIVE sacrificially of our resources and strive to be responsible stewards of all that God has given us, as directed in the Scriptures.

REMEMBER that God sent His Son to save the world, and our mission as the church is to be the Body of Christ until he comes again.

Pastor Simpson in *The Chrysalis* spoke strongly of the potential now unleashed: our Mission Statement

is important because it suggests we know what we are about and where we are headed as a local church on mission in Jesus' name....It is important because we have been given opportunity as a church not merely to assume we know what our purpose is, but to articulate that purpose....It is important because the ideas are in some way particular to our own church...[and] conversely, it is the same essential mission the Church has known for 2,000 years....It is important as a moment in our church life because only God knows our future here as we gather to form Wingate Baptist Church, and the uncertainties of the future will demand all the certainties we have spoken in this Mission Statement.⁹⁵

The Wingate Church had no inkling that it would seek to fulfill this mission under new leadership. On June 3, Dr. Simpson submitted his resignation to accept a call to the University Baptist Church, Chapel Hill, NC. He preached his final sermon on August 12, 1990, and the congregation responded in an expression of appreciation:

Words are inadequate to express our appreciation for all you have done for us. You have been an example of service and devotion not only to our own congregation but to others who have come your way. We hold in memory those times when the going was rough—you were there with a kind word of encouragement and a helping hand. Whether it was sickness, or death, or when a hard decision had to be made, you gave courage and strength to do what sometimes seemed impossible.

Perhaps most importantly you have helped us to focus on what a Baptist church ought to be. You have appealed to the best that is in us. You have urged us to have the heart to search and to find what we truly believed—what was really important.

For these intangible but most vital gifts, we thank you. Hopefully, long after you have gone we will remember the real truths that you have taught and preached.

God go with you.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ "Your Pastor Writes," *The Chrysalis*, April 25, 1990.

⁹⁶ From the Worship Guide, August 12, 1990.

Mitch and Betty had arrived in Wingate as a couple and departed as a family of four including Andrew, aged two and a half years and Aaron, aged two months. Heart-felt tears were shed all around, but Wingate was grateful for the ministry of healing and inspiration that the Simpsons had given. Mitch and Betty responded in gratitude:

Thank you for last Sunday and all that it represents.

As has been the case for four years, Sunday's worship time was full of dignity and meaning for us. The hymns seemed to be sung with a special poignancy and power, the prayers and the silences fraught with a Presence at once humbling and exhilarating. Your spirit of receptivity during the sermon was such as pastors dream of enjoying, and the looks in your eyes said it all....

For that and so much more, for those epiphanies of grace and glimpses of Spirit to which you have made us privy in these four splendid Wingate years, for allowing us to minister and then showing us deeper and purer ways of ministry, for being to us the very face of Christ, we shall always love you and we thank you with all that is in our being.⁹⁷

No goodbyes were spoken, only "Let's stay in touch." And we have.

The pastoral letter of early 1990 and the Mission Statement best communicate the spiritual growth of the congregation in the late 1980s. A brief look at the statistics confirms the physical aspects. From 1985 to 1990, the resident membership remained stable, from 501 to 503. Sunday School enrollment grew from 299 to 340(+14%) and average attendance from 153 to 171(+12%). Total gift receipts rose from \$260,516 to \$390,825(+50%; adjusted for inflation, +29%).⁹⁸

It is the Baptist way to seek and discover God's will for the leadership of a congregation. Wingate elected a Pastor Search Committee of five, chaired by Donald Merrill and including Gladys Hinson, Linda Isner, Elaine Kirkman, and Harvey Michael. They recommended Dr. James McCoy, Campus Minister at Wingate College, as interim pastor. He began the interim on October, 1, 1990. The committee then turned to its task of finding God's chosen shepherd for the Wingate congregation.

⁹⁷ *The Chrysalis*, August 15, 1990.

⁹⁸ Statistics from the congregation's Annual Church Profiles to the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

CHAPTER TEN

THE NINETIES: DREAMS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Wingate Baptist Church purchased its first office computer in 1987. We were only slightly ahead of the times because the symbol and office necessity of the 1990s was the desktop computer and the things which it enabled: word processing, financial spread sheets, email, and the internet, with its puzzling but ever-present acronyms www and .com. Every business larger than a one-room office needed the speed, convenience, and efficiency afforded by the marvelous machine and its mystery called software. Every year we discovered new technological gear invading our lives. We did not understand why anyone needed a “nano-second” to describe a duration of one/one-thousandth of a second, but smaller always seemed to be better. Our telephones soon fit the shirt pocket or purse and we carried an unbelievable amount of information and capacity in a laptop personal computer within a small briefcase or even on our belt if necessary. The 1990s became an appropriate spectacular conclusion to a marvelous century.⁹⁹ And it was the same for Wingate Baptist Church.

As Jim McCoy preached thought-provoking sermons each Sunday in the winter and spring of 1990-91, the Pastor Search Committee worked diligently. In March, Chairman Don Merrill announced the committee’s recommendation of Rev. Jim Somerville, pastor of the First Baptist Church of New Castle, Kentucky. During his five-year pastorate in New Castle, Somerville had completed requirements for his doctorate at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. The congregation unanimously called Jim as its pastor on March 17. With wife Christy, daughter of Rev. and Mrs. Bill Treadwell of Charlotte’s Myers Park Baptist Church, and daughters Eleanor and Catherine, Jim Somerville opened his ministry in Wingate on April 28, 1991.¹⁰⁰ Since the Somerville sojourn with the Wingate congregation completed the twentieth century, an examination of the social context of the 1990s will aid our understanding.

Protestants and sociologists continued to debate Dean Kelley’s theological thesis on the reasons for growth within conservative American churches. The pattern persisted in the 1990s as mainstream denominations saw declining memberships, contributions, and

⁹⁹ Jennings and Brewster, *The Century*, p.525ff.

¹⁰⁰ Church Conference Minutes, March 3 and April 28, 1991.



Jim Somerville

candidates for the ministry confirming their fears. Among the better sociological interpretations was Lawrence Iannaccone's "Why Strict Churches Are Strong" who argued against Kelley that "strictness" is the clearest indicator of church strength and growth potential.¹⁰¹ This means "complete loyalty, unwavering belief, and rigid adherence to a distinctive lifestyle." These congregations condemn deviants, avoid dissenters, and maintain common commitments. In contrast, mainline liberal denominations tolerate "free-riders" who want to identify with

Christianity but do not accept any distinctive beliefs which would clearly separate them from the world outside. Free riders weaken the witness of the congregation and move it toward the mainline.

The best analysis of the 1990s came from Dean Hoge, Benton Johnson and Donald Luidens, who accepted Kelley's thesis that the core issue is theological rather than sociological.¹⁰² "Our findings show that belief is the single best predictor of church participation, but it is *orthodox* Christian belief, and not the tenets of lay liberalism, that impels people to be involved in church." The lay liberals are more comfortable in the less exclusive mainline congregations where they reject "the claim that Christianity, or any other faith, is the only true religion. Lay liberals have no compelling truth, no 'good news,' to proclaim and few of them share the views that they do have with their friends and acquaintances."¹⁰³ As the debate continued, congregations searched for the key to survival and vitality.

¹⁰¹ *American Journal of Sociology*, 1994. 99:5: 1180-1211. .

¹⁰² *Vanishing Boundries: The Religion of Mainline Protestant Baby Boomers*, Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994.

¹⁰³ For further discussion, see www.albertmohler.com, May 10, 2005.

The end of the Cold War with the collapse of the Soviet Union left many Americans searching for a new understanding of the world. The competition and confrontation between democracy and communism had existed since the end of World War II and at times had threatened to ignite a third global struggle. Ronald Reagan's contemporary, Mikhail Gorbachev, initiated a program of renewal of the principles of Lenin and a rejection of "revisionists" like Josef Stalin, who had abandoned true communism for totalitarianism. Gorbachev advocated reforms based on openness, restructuring, and democratization.¹⁰⁴ But he also wanted to keep up with the United States in the eyes of the world and Reagan was running huge national deficits to modernize the military. The Soviet Union could not maintain the pace and provide for the needs of her citizens. The nation shattered into economic chaos. Small states quickly seized control of their own destinies. Whether orchestrated or accidental, the reality was the same. The Cold War was over.

By the time the Berlin wall came down in November, 1989, reuniting East and West Germany, George H. W. Bush, vice-president under Reagan, had won the Presidency. America entered the 1990s with the memory and glow of Reagan's revolution still fresh. But bad guys still existed in the world and one of them used the end of Soviet influence to expand his own power in the Middle East. Saddam Hussein and Iraq invaded its neighbor Kuwait to expand its Persian Gulf coastline and to broaden its share of the riches of petroleum. The invasion of Kuwait quickly crippled that relatively peaceful Arab emirate and threatened to decrease the supply of crude oil to the western world. President Bush's demand that Iraq withdraw was disregarded. Thus with support of other Arab states, United States forces staged "Desert Storm" to restore the autonomy of Kuwait and neutralize the aggressive capability of Iraq. Reagan's military modernization surprised everybody except the military. American forces completely destroyed Iraqi military capacity with weapons and precision bombing never before demonstrated. For example, in World War II, Berlin was bombed for five years and reduced to rubble, but its communication systems, electricity and other infrastructure were operational when Allied troops entered the city. In 1991, Bagdad was bombed for 48 hours and essentially shut down with no electricity, water, sewer, television or telephone while leaving the city

¹⁰⁴ Gorbachev's words: *glasnost* (openness), *perestroika* (restructuring), and *demokratizatsiya* (democratization).

and its main structures generally intact. The Desert Storm operation suffered few casualties and was over quickly. Maybe modern technology made war obsolete. Americans watched the smart-weapons accomplish their task on a new television channel, Cable News Network, whose only service was the news. CNN completely dwarfed all other coverage by the world's other networks. Their commitment to showing reality with a neutral camera, rather than a more patriotic presentation of good guys and bad guys, caught everyone a little off guard. But even the Pentagon adjusted, and the world came to expect and appreciate a more unbiased reporting of the military conflict.¹⁰⁵

President Bush fully expected to be elected for a second term, but the charisma was lacking. Arkansas native Bill Clinton campaigned hard on the Democratic ticket, as usual adopting the successful programs of the incumbents and opposing the programs that did not work. Clinton won in 1992 and again in 1996 to finish out the century. The popular Reagan tax cuts remained as the fuel under the economy. Clinton reduced the national deficit to more manageable proportions and still funded more programs to assist the lower classes. With the able assistance of Madelyn Albright, Clinton had a firmer hand in foreign policy than Bush. Thus in the nineties, America basked in the glow of economic prosperity, a boom in technology, low inflation, and reasonable interest rates. The nation was stable, the western nations seemed in control, and America was looking into a new century with confidence and anticipation.

The decade was not without its blemishes, of course. Clinton's activity prior to 1992 in an Arkansas real estate transaction called Whitewater led to a Congressional investigation. Conservative Republicans managed to pass a Bill of Impeachment on which, however, Clinton was acquitted. Clinton was only the second American President in history to be impeached. O.J. Simpson, an African American football hero, was tried for murdering his wife and a friend in a television reality so hysterical that it seemed more like a soap opera. Simpson was acquitted. Also in California, white police officers, captured on video tape beating a helpless black man, were also acquitted. Both events became symbolic of the American race dilemma showing everyone that the problems were not solved. In 1995, a truck bomb exploded alongside a federal building in Oklahoma City, killing 168 workers, the work of a

¹⁰⁵ Jennings and Brewster, *The Century*, p. 532ff.

right-wing religious fanatic. And Princess Diana was killed in a car accident in Paris. Even under the shadow of these tragedies, the 1990s climaxed the 20th century with the hope that the new century might somehow discover a new brotherhood among the nations and races of the world.

On a more regional and local scene, North Carolina continued to attract new residents to expand its population to over 6.5 million in 1990, increasing 21.3% in the decade to 8 million in 2000. As textile production moved to emerging Asian nations, new financial capital sought to replace the lost textile jobs which had so long sustained a large portion of the work force. Likewise tobacco production and processing fell precipitously as more Americans understood the dangers of tobacco usage. Farmers turned their fields to soybeans and cotton, while the Yadkin Valley even developed a distinct wine-making culture, especially using the native muscadine grape. Every town lured high-tech and health care businesses to replace the jobs of an older era. For a time, Bank of America and Wachovia made Charlotte the largest manager of financial resources in the nation outside of New York. But challenges also existed. Republicans cut taxes in the mid-nineties, but Democrats believed that teacher salaries must be raised to national averages. They also supported programs to raise water quality and funded the Smart Start program for young children. The prosperity of the period raised general revenues to cover expenses but unplanned expenditures like the refund of prior taxes on state retirees' pensions and the clean-up of Hurricane Floyd in 1999 put North Carolina into a budget crisis at the turn of the century.¹⁰⁶

In politics, the times were interesting. Democrats maintained their grip on the governorship, electing James Hunt, Jr. twice, but Republicans won more offices than ever on the coattails of Reagan and Bush. The state legislature fluctuated, as Republicans kept the contests close. In 1994, 26 legislators were women, 21 of them Republicans. North Carolina's Presidential votes in the 1990s favored the Republican candidate, reflecting Jesse Helms' continuing influence in the state. Republican Sue Myrick followed her success as Charlotte's mayor to a seat in the United States House, again with narrow majorities in the North Carolina delegation fluctuating between parties. John Edwards upset incumbent Lauch Faircloth in 1998, signaling a slight shift in the political winds.

¹⁰⁶ Schley R. Lyons, "Politics and Government," www.ncatlasrevisited.org, p.3.

Mecklenburg's population flowed into every adjacent county and Union County's western edge grew as fast as available facilities would allow. Between 1990 and 2000, Union County population increased an astounding 46.9%, 35.6% of that inward migration. In the decade, North Carolina had the fastest-growing immigrant population of any state in the nation, most of them Hispanic.¹⁰⁷ After decades with a stable system of elementary and middle schools feeding five high schools, the Union County youth population exploded with the influx of new families. By the turn of the century, Union was one of the fastest growing counties not only in North Carolina but in the nation. Wingate was just beyond this population tsunami for the moment, but every knowledgeable person sensed that a way of life was passing within the span of a generation. Wingate College became a university in 1995, strengthening its faculty with a larger percentage of doctorates and better prepared students. Graduate programs in Education and Business brought a different feel to the campus. International programs of study exposed Wingate students and faculty to world capitals and foreign languages spoken in the streets rather than in a language lab. And Wingate's administration was actively looking at new programs to meet the needs of a growing society. In 2000, just across the street from Wingate Baptist Church, the Jefferson at Wingate Apartments arose to house 406 students. This new residential arrangement included a clubhouse, outdoor pool, and sand volleyball court.

Into this complex and clearly burgeoning milieu walked Jim Somerville in 1991, a vigorous and charismatic personality, whose task it was to lead the Wingate congregation and point them to the challenges of the day. He came with high recommendations. One of his professors said that Jim "has the uncanny ability to relate the Scriptures in an honest and meaningful way to the life of individuals and the congregation as a whole. I think he is most suited for a church situated in the context of a college community, and you would be well served by his outstanding gifts of ministry...." Another wrote that "Jim is a very personable and creative person. He meets people well, works well with peers and has a deep genuine care for his congregation and friends."

In the letter of invitation, the Wingate congregation pledged to "covenant with you to seek to discover, develop, and use together our

¹⁰⁷ Rob Christensen, "Politics, migration tangle," *The [Raleigh, NC] News & Observer*, March 28, 2004.

God-given gifts in ministry; to engage ourselves in a mutual sharing of faith, hope, and love as the family of God; to gratefully acknowledge God's enabling presence in our midst as we share and work together to bring persons to God through Jesus Christ."¹⁰⁸ On May 5, the congregation in worship celebrated Holy Communion with its pastor, marking the beginning of a new chapter in the history of Wingate Baptist.

That same afternoon the Church Council met in an extended session, and the pastor heard from various lay leaders how the Wingate congregation was currently engaged in Christian ministry. Robert Doak, Sunday School Director, reported that the nominating committee was well into its annual task of securing teachers for next year, the Education Committee was studying various options in Sunday School materials to strengthen the future program, and a church-wide picnic was scheduled for the 19th at the College Lake, preceded by recreation for both children and adults. Corinna Bivens announced that the Sanctuary Committee was revising the guidelines for use of church facilities by wedding parties. Gene Morgan described a new audio and video system for the nursery area enabling workers to participate more effectively in the worship experience. Joe Larrimore announced that the Good Timers would be touring Calvary Church in May and the Baptist Foundation facility in Cary later in the summer. Edith Larrimore reported that the WMU had revitalized its Baptist Young Women's organization and enlisted new members. Bill Braswell reviewed the Stewardship Committee's discussion of a financial audit, whether to seek full or partial examination, and solicited the Council's opinion. The majority favored a limited audit. Jay Taylor announced that the Cassette and Visitation Committee had made a total of sixty visits in April and needed more members to better serve the congregation. Beverly Christopher, Chair of the Deacons, discussed plans for each family member group to stage a get-together with the new pastor for fellowship and making acquaintance. Mike Chudalski, Baptist Men's Director, discussed the current project of the Overground Railroad in bringing Jose Medina's family to America and the need for immediate funds lest Jose's children be pressed into military service by one of the warring factions in El Salvador. The Council decided to seek the assistance of the Missions and Affiliations Committees to

¹⁰⁸ "Introducing the Jim Somervilles," [Distributed in Church Conference, March 17, 1991] Pastor Search Committee: Gladys Hinson, Linda Isner, Elaine Kirkman, Harvey Michael, Don Merrill, Chairman.

provide temporary funding for these needs. James Hall of the Personnel Committee reported that the congregational gathering to honor Jim McCoy for his service as Interim Pastor was a success and that flowers honoring the McCoy's were placed in the Lamberth Memorial Baptist Church in Roxboro on Jim's first Sunday in the pulpit. From these reports, Pastor Jim Somerville knew immediately that the Wingate Church was deeply committed to Christian ministry, and he had only to point the direction to lead a new surge of congregational involvement in the life of the community.¹⁰⁹

The following week the pastor participated in the Baptist Fellowship Convocation in Atlanta with 6,000 Baptists who discussed new mission ventures, new Sunday School literature, and new ways of cooperation. A keynote message by Walter Shurden advocated that a denomination should be only a "missions delivery system" and that in creating the "Cooperative Baptist Fellowship," we are not necessarily severing ties with the SBC, we are only creating another delivery system.¹¹⁰ Most of the congregation had seen this change coming for any years. Sidney Fletcher was our messenger to the Southern Baptist Convention in June, but the Church in conference voted to allocate the \$12,040 Cooperative Program funds from the 1990 budget, currently held in escrow, to World Hunger, Missionary Families' Counseling at Baptist Hospital, the Overground Railroad, and the new Divinity School at Wake Forest University. In December, the congregation further earmarked its missions funding to include Ruschlikon Seminary, the Baptist Seminary at Richmond, Habitat for Humanity, and the Associated Baptist Press.¹¹¹ For several years, the Wingate congregation remained only associated with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, maintaining concurrently its relationship to Southern Baptist Convention, the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina and the Union Baptist Association. It did, however, cease to contribute missions funds to the Southern Baptist Convention. In effect, Wingate Baptist chose a new delivery system for its international missionary endeavor.

Near the end of that first June of the Somerville years, the congregation read about the whirlwind that was their pastor's Sunday schedule.

¹⁰⁹ Minutes of the Church Council, May 5, 1991; *The Chrysalis*, May 1, 8, 1991.

¹¹⁰ "From the Pastor," *The Chrysalis* May 15, 1991.

¹¹¹ Church Conference Minutes, June 9, December 8, 1991.

It was a great day for the church; it was a great day for her pastor. It started at 8:00 on Sunday morning with the Men's Breakfast---pancakes, sausage, grits, hot coffee, orange juice and a good word from Mike Chudalski about taking time for what is important in life....At 9:45 I was singing favorite hymns with Jerry Kirkman and 40 other Sunday School-goers....At 10:00 I joined the Sojourners' lively discussion of roles and relationships in the Christian family. At 11:00 I welcomed visitors Tom and Marla Corts and Jim and Jane McCoy [at worship].... At 3:00 I went to the dedication of the first Habitat for Humanity house in Union County....At 4:00 I attended a wedding [in our sanctuary] and was moved by the beauty and the power of it all. At 5:00 I spoke to members of the Wingate United Methodist Church about what it is like to be Baptist. At 7:00 I listened as some of our youth talked to me about what it is like to be a teenager....At every stop on that frenzied itinerary I witnessed Christian people teaching, singing, caring, learning, loving, celebrating, questioning, sharing, rejoicing, trusting---in enthusiastic response to the claim of Christ on their lives. How good it is to be in a place where the phrase "church life" is more than just wishful thinking.¹¹²

Jim's enthusiasm and pace was contagious. After a September fellowship featuring Lynn Moss on the guitar and story-tellers Martha Jackson, Ron Cox, and Harvey Michael, Jim opined: "this church is remarkably blessed. When you think of the great numbers of people in our membership who can preach, teach, play, care, sing, cook, write, listen, laugh, give, love, tell stories, take pictures, make homemade ice cream...you realize there is no limit to what we might achieve together as the church of Jesus Christ in this place."¹¹³

The fall months brought a new emphasis on the Sunday School. The youngsters received revised and improved materials from Nashville, and the Adults experimented with the new *Formations* curricula from Smyth & Helwys. Jim confessed to being a reformed Sunday-School skipper. He did not enjoy the hour as a youngster and discarded it while in college. Then he discovered that he did not know what Sunday School really was. "When the topic is interesting and the discussion is lively and the teacher is good there is no better place in the world than a Sunday School class. It's a place where you can ask the questions that were raised by last week's sermon, or this week's reading, and search for the answers together...So, come on, Sunday School may be better than you

¹¹² "From the Pastor," *The Chrysalis*, June 26, 1991.

¹¹³ "From the Pastor," *The Chrysalis*, September 4, 1991.

remember.”¹¹⁴ On high attendance Sunday in late October, 208 people decided to be a “reformed Sunday School skipper.”

The pertinent messages continued to flow from Jim’s creative imagination in *The Chrysalis*: an inspiring narrative on Worldwide Communion Sunday on the meaning of this event of celebration and remembrance in the life of the Christian. Another reflected on giving to the church and the many other worthy charitable organizations. And then came a reminder that while there are recognized problems in main-line Protestant denominations at the national level, the essence of church is its local character, and the problems must be addressed at the local level. Churches can contribute to denominational efforts but must recognize that they are responsible for themselves and their own health and well being.¹¹⁵

The congregation and its new pastor settled in comfortably during the fall. College students returned, opening another facet of ministry, the Constitution & By-Laws were again updated, the Good Timers visited the mountains for the fall spectacular, the Church Council explored the purchase of a van for traveling groups, and the choirs planned and rehearsed their Christmas cantata.

By this time, the congregation recognized that their pastor possessed significant gifts in the pulpit. His sermons were timely, interesting, and firmly based on Biblical truth. He preferred the narratives in Scripture centered around people, events, and relationships. The parables were rich sources of divine truth. He had discovered that experiences with the natural world, his family life, and his own sense of God’s presence were trustworthy in understanding God’s Word of reconciliation. The Christian Church at its best embodied God’s call to discipleship and the hope for enduring relationships within the human community.

The year 1992 saw the opening and expansion of ministries for the Wingate congregation. A budget surplus was divided between the building fund and the new van to be used primarily for traveling church groups. The Good Timers made their first trip in the vehicle in April. In February, the Church Council discussed and the congregation approved an outreach to the B&M Trailer Park led by Ginger Tucker and a group of Sunday School volunteers. A trailer was rented and at a Saturday Clean

¹¹⁴ “A Word from your Pastor,” *The Chrysalis*, September 25, 1991.

¹¹⁵ “A Word from your Pastor,” *The Chrysalis*, October 2, 23, 30, 1991.

Up Day, volunteers of all ages scrubbed, raked, nailed, and installed a basketball goal. The ministry began with 10 volunteers and 13 children in March, rose by June to 48 total pupils, and settled to about 20 children regularly for the Saturday morning Bible study and recreation.

The congregation in March experimented for six weeks with an early, more informal worship service, and during the summer all adults combined in a Sunday School class led successively by Byrns Coleman on "The Focus of the Four Gospels," Bob Billinger on "Climbing the Spiritual Mountain: the Four Major Religions," and John Sykes on "God, the Gospels and C.S. Lewis." The special summer Sunday morning arrangement concluded with Ann Williams in concert on August 30.

The Jones House adjacent to the Church lost its renters and suggestions emerged that the Youth would benefit from the facility for their Sunday School, Youth Fellowship, GAs, RAs, and other activities. The Church approved some interior painting, carpet, and repairs, enabling an expansion of that ministry.¹¹⁶

With new avenues of service opening, the need for a staff person in Christian Education became imperative. Jim advocated: "Christian education is more than Sunday School. It is marriage enrichment, and children's worship, and singles retreats, and parenting workshops, and orientation for new members, and breakfast Bible studies, and spiritual life seminars, and youth ski trips, and more."¹¹⁷ In September, the congregation completed a questionnaire which revealed high interest in a comprehensive ministry for single adults, a Sunday School class addressing substantial theological questions, a class for youth focused on baptism and church membership, a class for new member orientation, and other educational initiatives. The Personnel Committee drew up a job description for a Minister of Education and salary range which the congregation accepted in October.¹¹⁸ A search began to fill the position.

And finally, the future denominational orientation of the Wingate Church was becoming clearer. Jim attended the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship annual meeting in June, gathering information and "testing the spirits, to see whether they are from God." His message upon returning put the challenge of the time in perspective:

¹¹⁶ Church Council Minutes, February 2, April 5, May 2, June 7, 1992.

¹¹⁷ "A Word from your Pastor," *The Chrysalis*, August 19, 1992.

¹¹⁸ Church Council Minutes, October 4, 1992; Church Conference Minutes, October 11, 1992.

Personally, I'm fed up with the agenda of the "new" Southern Baptist Convention. I'm tired of being asked to send my dollars where I would not be allowed to go. I find myself wanting to make a formal break with a denomination that no longer represents the principles that have made us Baptist. At the same time I am proud to support the strong state convention of North Carolina, which is (like it or not) a part of the SBC. I feel a deep sense of loyalty to the Alliance of Baptists (formerly the Southern Baptist Alliance), whose pioneering work brought us through the darkest hour of this crisis. I'm excited by the spirit and harmony of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, and by the good work they have done to rescue the casualties of the SBC controversy. As I said, it hasn't been easy, and it isn't easy now. Difficult choices must be made before a course can be charted. We may have to redraw the map.

At last year's meeting of the CBF, Walter Shurden told us that a denomination is "a missions delivery system." That kind of definition is helpful because it puts the emphasis in the right place: it's the mission, not the system, that is most important. So instead of arguing about the merits of this or that system we, as a church, might begin to remember our mission, and search together for the most effective means of getting it done. Instead of talking about the "moderates" and the "fundamentalists," we might start talking again about the lost and the hungry, the poor and the lonely, the prodigal and the oppressed. As we move toward the accomplishment of our mission we may have to abandon a system that doesn't work anymore. We may have to create a new one from a number of different "parts." But we simply *must* get on with the task to which Christ has called us, and we must do it now, no matter how high the winds, no matter how heavy the seas.¹¹⁹

The new perspective became more focused when the Affiliations Committee recommended to the Stewardship Committee that the congregation utilize "the *Vision 2000 Plan*, devised by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, as our guide for missions giving for 1993." With the acceptance of the 1993 budget, this recommendation was approved by the congregation.¹²⁰

But through all the anxiety, the Christian year was highlighted by traditional and valued events: January Bible Study, Lent and Easter, a May picnic on the theme: "Wingate Baptist Church is family," Vacation Bible School directed by Carolyn Braswell, the birthday celebration of Pentecost, a Youth Car Wash to benefit the Trailer Park Ministry, welcoming new Wingate students with a cold glass of lemonade, All Saints' Day, Advent and the Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions, the choral music "A Child is Born," and Christmas.

¹¹⁹ "A Word from your Pastor," *The Chrysalis*, April 22, May 13, 1992.

¹²⁰ Letter included in Church Conference Minutes for 1992. No mention of formal action is included in the minutes.

Jim acknowledged gratefully that the Wingate church would not function without the superlative contributions of the staff. Helen Helms, Financial Secretary, not only pays the bills but knows where people live and how this church really works. Brenda Tomberlin, Day Care Director, supervises the loving care that the children receive and has put that ministry back on sound financial footing. Ron Bostic, Minister of Music, maintains a cheerful approach to music ministry which makes people want to do their best. Glenda Spivey, Church Secretary, handles people, phones and numerous requests with a smile, while always faithfully printing the Worship Guide and *The Chrysalis*. David Sherwood, Minister to Youth, manages a roomful of young people in creative Christian education who declare that he is a happening youth minister. Ann Williams, Organist, creates music with beauty and power, enhancing the worship experience of the congregation. Jim Somerville and Wingate Baptist were very grateful for the talented and faithful staff.¹²¹

Maybe the Wingate church had become accustomed to the rapid pace of Jim Somerville leadership, or perhaps the immediate crises had been resolved. In any case, 1993 was relatively quiet. The January Bible Study was as usual held in February, Ron Bostic's Youth Choir joined its counterpart from First Baptist, Monroe, to present a concert in Laney Hall in May. New chairs were purchased for the fellowship facility and a new computer system for the church secretary. The Good Timers enjoyed the new van on trips to Charleston, the Spencer Railroad Shop Museum, and in December a visit to McAdenville to see the Christmas lights. The Trailer Park Ministry expanded under Ginger Tucker's leadership to include Sunday afternoon Bible study for adults and "homework tutoring" for children in the Saturday program. Jay Taylor's Cassette and Visitation Committee continued to report 40 to 60 visits per month. By September, the average attendance in Sunday School was up 40 persons over the same period a year ago. That kind of enthusiasm welcomed the new Minister of Education, Cheryl Lane, who joined the church staff in early August. Cheryl, an Alabamian and recent graduate of Southwestern Seminary, had experience in programs for single and senior adults as well as youth seminars, Vacation Bible School, and literacy missions. She immediately began planning family outings, weekly summer youth activities, fellowship experiences for single adults, and broadening the activities of the Good Timers. Cheryl brought a new dimension of

¹²¹ "A Word from your Pastor," *The Chrysalis*, July 15, 1992.

training and experience to the Wingate church staff.¹²² And on October's High Attendance Sunday, 221 persons participated in Sunday School and 339 worshipped in the Wingate sanctuary.

The Day Care Committee and Director Brenda Tomberlin requested a long-overdue renewal of the Day Care Playground. Several pieces of equipment were broken or badly worn. The church voted to redesign the playground and update its equipment.¹²³ Contributions totaling \$2,500-3,000 were solicited outside the budget. The challenge was met and new equipment installed, significantly heightening the happiness of many children. The Day Care ministry had become a important part of the church's impact on the Wingate community.

In the national arena, actions of some Baptists confirmed and supported the ideas of the Wingate congregation. In February, the Women's Missionary Union voted to support the missions programs of other Baptist groups such as the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and forge relationships with evangelical missions organizations outside the SBC. The leadership of the Convention objected and declared that "Historically, the WMU's whole purpose for existence has been to serve as an auxiliary of the Southern Baptist Convention." The women's organization disagreed and countered that the WMU "exists to enable churches and believers to participate in introducing all persons in the world to Christ." The Wingate congregation applauded this clear affirmation of the Great Commission.¹²⁴

In a later newsletter, Jim commented on a Bill Moyers' speech on "Being Baptist" and succinctly characterized Baptists as understood by many if not most Wingate people:

The brand [of Baptists] that appeals to many of us holds that while the Bible is our anchor, it is no icon; that revelation continues, truth is not frozen in doctrine but emerges from experience and encounter, and continuity is found in the community of faith that includes both saints and sinners. In Jesus we see the power of the Living Word over tired practice and dead belief. In his relationships with women, the sick, the outcast and the stranger—even with the tax collector—Jesus kept breaking new ground. The literal observance of

¹²² "Meet Cheryl Lane," *The Chrysalis*, June 16, 1993.

¹²³ Church Conference Minutes, August 8, 1993; *The Chrysalis*, August 11, 1993.

¹²⁴ "A Word from your Pastor," *The Chrysalis*, February 3, 1993. Quotations are taken from this secondary source.

the law was not to quench the spirit of justice. "The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath."¹²⁵

By 1993, the Deacon Ministry Plan had been in operation for about a decade. The congregation and those elected as Deacons had become accustomed to this new servant ministry.

We often talk in our meetings about special needs and joys that we know of in our congregation and how we can best minister to and celebrate with one another. Please keep your deacon informed of those joyous occasions and the difficult times that you face....The deacons are also interested in providing leadership in our church and in our community. Please pray for us and let us know of your suggestions as we continually seek God's leadership and grace in our work.¹²⁶

While many weeks and many Sundays were similar in character, occasionally an extraordinary weekend captured the imagination of the pastor:

This morning, as I write, I am in a commemorating mood, because I believe not one but several miracles occurred in the life of Wingate Baptist Church last weekend and somebody ought to do something about it. Somebody ought to raise a pile of stones [as Joshua did after crossing the Jordan into the Promised Land, so that the people would always remember God's special care for the his chosen people].

Stone Number One: The Church Council met for three hours on Saturday morning to make plans for 1994, and there were some great ones made. Look forward to one of the best years ever.

Stone Number Two: While the Church Council was at work inside, the Sojourners and Singles were at work outside, shoveling sand on the playground and putting up an impressive wooden fort. They started at nine and worked for six sweaty hours.

Stone Number Three: Volunteers at the trailer park went from door-to-door Saturday afternoon cheerfully inviting people to attend supper at Wingate Baptist Church the next night. Some said yes.

Stone Number Four: In response to the invitation on Sunday morning fifteen people came forward to join the body of Christ in this place. It was a great crowd there at the front of the sanctuary, and a great day the church.

Stone Number Five: I thought we would have twenty people at supper Sunday night, but a *hundred people* showed up, maybe more! To me it looked

¹²⁵ "A Word from your Pastor," *The Chrysolis*, February 10, 1993.

¹²⁶ "Deacon News," *The Chrysolis*, October 13, 1993.

like we had thirty people from the trailer park and seventy more of our own. The food was plentiful. The fellowship was real. What a wonderful surprise!

Stone Number Six: The baptism. Mark Thomas, Brandon Smith, Jacalyn McClary, Michelle Moser, Brittany Goodreau, LaShunda McLendon, and Adrian Redfearn all entered the waters of baptism on Sunday night and bravely professed their faith. "Jesus is Lord!" they said, just before being immersed in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. How good it was to bring up out of that water these seven new members of the family of God, and what a perfect conclusion to a perfect weekend.¹²⁷

So while 1993 was relatively quiet, it was not without positive developments. The signs of vitality were numerous and obvious. The growth in Sunday School was encouraging as was the addition of 53 new members to the congregation. New staff added talent and enthusiasm and casual conversation speculated on the "new plans for 1994." *The Chrysalis* headline in January screamed: "WEDNESDAY NIGHTS **ALIVE!**" introducing a new weekly supper at a reasonable price and convenient for working families to enable them to participate in new exciting mid-week programs. Preschoolers had Music, then Mission friends, older children had Choir, then RA's/GA's, the youth had Music 'N' Missions, and Study Club, and adults shared mid-week worship, several workshops, Handbells, Choir and committee meetings.¹²⁸ The first Wednesday attracted 116 to supper and 80 permanent reservations with plenty of missions, music, Bible study experiences, prayer support, and high-interest workshops. In the next newsletter, Jim said he had been dreaming about a happening in our education building—a vision of

people in the fellowship hall, the kitchen, the conference room, the preschool department, and in every part of the building people are laughing, talking, listening, working, taking notes, and singing songs. It's never been very clear—in the vision—just what kind of event was going on in that building, but it was clearly good....[On Wednesday night] I thought, 'This is it. This is what I've been dreaming of!' And it's a wonderful thing, isn't it, when dreams come true?¹²⁹

In March, with Wednesday Nights *Alive!* averaging about 130 in a facility with a capacity of 90, the church began to dream of a new facility. Wingate Baptist was growing in every discernible way and the fellowship hall and kitchen were simply inadequate. Since additional Sunday School

¹²⁷ "A Word from your Pastor," *The Chrysalis*, September 29, 1993.

¹²⁸ "Coming in February," *The Chrysalis*, January 5, 1994.

¹²⁹ "A Word from your Pastor," *The Chrysalis*, February 9, 1994

space was also needed, the Church Council began to explore options. The congregation elected a building committee to survey the needs and resources and return a recommendation, with an option to terminate the process at any point. The elected committee consisted of Elaine Austin, Harry Chaney, Jerry Kirkman, Derrick Odom, Don Perry, Ron Rushing, Jerry Surratt, Allison Thomas and Ruth Trull. In June, the Building Committee Chairman, Jerry Surratt, reported to the church the committee's conclusions: the church needs to consider building a new fellowship area; the site of the Youth House appears best suited; and an architect should be engaged to design a building to blend with the existing sanctuary. Jim reflected in the newsletter:

the building committee is taking a long look at the future of the church. I think they are imagining a new fellowship hall filled with people on Wednesday nights and the momentum of that program spilling over into every other area of the church, so that both our worship services are full on Sunday morning, so that our Sunday School rooms, all of them, are bustling with the life and energy of people who have found a place here....

When that dream comes true I think it would be time for this church to "mother" a new congregation—to ask for 50 to 100 volunteers who would be willing to start a daughter church not far away. With prayer and perseverance that church may even outgrow this one. It has happened before (ever heard of First Baptist, Monroe?).¹³⁰

On September 11, the committee recommended to the church that (1) our architect, John Dickerson, prepare a line-item cost estimate and detailed specifications for bidding of the proposed building, estimated at about \$492,940 for 5,392 square feet, (2) the church conduct a successful campaign to raise 40% of the estimated cost, (3) after receiving an acceptable bid, the church would secure a loan for the remainder of the cost, and (4) construction would begin on the adjacent Jones property in late Spring, 1995. Upstairs space in the sanctuary building would be designated and adapted for the youth. It was announced that we currently have \$120,000 in hand. In the ballot vote, the recommendation passed, 157 yes, 6 no, 20 seek other means. The pastor suggested that we initiate a fall campaign to raise at least \$70,000 toward the project.¹³¹

¹³⁰ "A Word from your Pastor," *The Chrysalis*, July 20, 1994.

¹³¹ Church Conference Minutes, June 5, September 11, 1994; "Questions for the Building Committee," *The Chrysalis*, August 31, 1994.

In the midst of these ambitious decisions, the work of the congregation proceeded normally. The Deacons quietly ministered in times of joy and sorrow, celebration and frustration, always asking the questions of the future: how can we enhance our spiritual life, improve community racial relations, and include in communion those members who cannot come. The Trailer Park Mission maintained its vitality under the faithful leadership of Ginger Tucker, now with some financial support of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. New relationships were developing with the Nicey Grove Baptist Church. The Pathfinders, a new adult Sunday School class, developed out of the work of Cheryl Lane, a prison ministry was initiated at the new facility on Presson Road near Wingate, the success of Wednesday Night Alive! generated ambitious plans for the fall season, and the Vacation Bible School flourished yet again under Carolyn Braswell. Jim reflected on Bible School:

Yep. It's always the same thing. It's always somebody handing a paper cup full of red Kool-Aid to a thirsty child just off the playground, always some teenager demonstrating a tricky craft project for a group of preschoolers, always a young mother prompting her class during commencement exercises as they mumble memorized Bible verses, always some funny story that gets repeated again and again during the week, and always some child who looks up at her dad through misty eyes on the last night and says, "I love Bible School."

Yep. It's always the same thing, the same wonderful thing, year after year. Thank you Carolyn Braswell and army of volunteers, for rolling that Sisyphean rock uphill, for making it happen one more time.¹³²

During September and October, the congregation discussed and debated the building proposal. Some thought it was too expensive; others preferred a less expensive addition to the existing facility. Many worried that the Youth would feel depressed at losing their special house. But the big question was: can we raise \$70,000 on Homecoming day on October 9 to be paid in 1994. Homecoming Day gathered 336 worshipers, including beloved former pastors Dewey Hobbs and Mitch Simpson. Collecting the offering took a long time, it seemed to the pastor, but that might be a good sign, he thought. Then after the hymn, Bob Young handed him the results: pledges of \$103,387.86 and of that actual cash of more than \$76,000! It was an emotional moment that generated a collective gasp, wild applause, and tears of joy.¹³³

¹³² "A Word from your Pastor," *The Chrysalis*, June 22, 1994.

¹³³ "A Word from your Pastor," *The Chrysalis*, October 12, 1994.

For every mountaintop experience, one must come back down the trail. But Wingate Baptist was not ready to relinquish the momentum currently inspiring the congregation. 1995 began with an emphasis on visitation. The pastor challenged every member to participate by discovering someone they would enjoy contacting on behalf of the congregation. And new forms were encouraged—visit a neighbor, a lonely friend, send a card, make a telephone call. Go as a group to an event—breakfast at Hardee’s, a high school football game—get to know people. Newsletters gave hints on what to do and what not to do, how to be comfortable and why all of this was important. And it was working to maintain the excitement that carried from Sunday School class into worship and on to the still-crowded but happy Wednesday Nights Alive!

The Youth said goodbye to the old Jones House and settled in refurbished quarters upstairs in the secluded northwest corner of the main building. They were soon talking about a new program called “PASSPORT” which David Sherwood described as a weeklong summer mission experience this year to be held at Shorter College, Rome, Georgia. Since Baptist Men’s Day was a regular January feature, Wingate decided that Baptist Women’s Day was equally important and should be a regular event in the calendar. On March 5, women of the church of all ages led the worship service. The congregation had long ago abandoned the male leadership/female subordination model characteristic of many Baptist churches. The Diaconate included women and elected them to positions of leadership. The current Board was chaired by Chris Billinger with Betty Griffin, Ginger Tucker and Max Thomas holding the other offices. That, of course, meant that Chris shared the leadership role with the pastor at the Communion Table. Wingate believed that “God created man in his own image, male and female he created them.”

The congregation needed all the momentum available and lots of faith in addition when the bids were opened on the fellowship hall in early April. The low bid was \$560,500. That swallowed the \$200,000 on hand and could necessitate a loan of \$350,000 at 10% interest for 15 years. Nevertheless, the church accepted the challenge, set the Groundbreaking for May 7, asking for a “groundbreaking gift,” large or small, to launch the project. In the same newsletter, donations were requested on the following Sunday for a Habitat for Humanity house being built in Wingate by several churches in the area.¹³⁴ On May 7 and

¹³⁴ *The Chrysalis*, April 26, 1995; Church Conference Minutes, April 30, 1995.

May 14, the Wingate congregation gave a total of \$21,749 for the regular budget offering, the building fund, and the Habitat fund.

In June, the first "PASSPORT" experience for Wingate youth included Alex Aldridge, Elizabeth Bagley, Jon Belk, Bess Braswell, Holly Chudalski, Christo Fitzpatrick, Rosa Karim, Julie Merrill, Ken Pipes, Brandon Smith, Travis Stegall, Laura Stone, and Connie Wallace. After traveling to Rome, Georgia, the young people joined with other groups in a hands-on missions work. They "worked on nine different missions projects, ranging from multi-housing ministries to working on Habitat homes to clearing land for a ramp for physically-challenged fishermen." They worshiped, sang, and played. PASSPORT "taught us it is okay to share love with others and with ourselves...it is okay to tell someone you love them...Everyone worked hard. Everyone had a good time. Everyone grew in their personal walk with the Lord." Immediately David Sherwood began to talk of next year's PASSPORT experience.¹³⁵

While the youth were in Georgia, Jim Somerville was in Texas at the annual meeting of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. The four-year-old organization discussed whether it should self-consciously become a denomination, or already was one. In the end, its missions statement answered the question best:

We are a fellowship of Baptist Christians and churches who share a passion for the Great Commission of Jesus Christ and a commitment to Baptist principles of faith and practice. Our mission is to network, empower, and mobilize Baptist Christians and churches for effective missions and ministry in the name of Christ.¹³⁶

In a later newsletter, Jim reprinted a CBF statement of Baptist principles:

Soul Freedom—We believe in the priesthood of all believers. We affirm the freedom and responsibility of every person to relate directly to God without the imposition of creed or the control of clergy or government.

Bible Freedom—We believe in the authority of Scripture. We believe the Bible, under the Lordship of Christ, is central in the life of the individual and church. We affirm the freedom and right of every Christian to interpret and apply Scripture under the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

Church Freedom—We believe in the autonomy of every local church. We believe Baptist churches are free, under the Lordship of Christ, to determine their membership and leadership, to order their worship and work, to ordain

¹³⁵ "A Word from the Minister of Youth," *The Chrysalis*, July 26, 1995.

¹³⁶ "From your Pastor," *The Chrysalis*, July 26, 1995.

whomever they perceive as gifted for ministry, and to participate as they deem appropriate in the larger body of Christ.

Religious Freedom—We believe in freedom of religion, freedom for religion, and freedom from religion. We support the separation of church and state.¹³⁷

The Baptists of the Wingate Church seemed to have found the right place.

Cheryl Lane continued to challenge and strengthen the congregation with her fall line-up for Wednesday evenings. A good experience was available for all ages and personal interests in missions and Bible study. Three adult workshops offered "An Ounce of Prevention: Safeguarding Your Marriage," an interactive video series, "From Christ to Constantine: The Trial and Testimony of the Early Church," led by Walter Woodson, or "Who is My neighbor?" a visitation/action oriented group, led by the Pastor and studying Kennon Callahan's *Visiting in a Age of Mission* and then venturing into the community to try new models of visiting in the name of Christ.¹³⁸

The Church Council spend its entire August session discussing our mission statement, statement of purpose, and covenant, emerging with a challenging conception, published in *The Chrysalis*:

OUR VISION

In and through the Lord Jesus Christ

Is to develop

Life giving and life changing

RELATIONSHIPS

with God and others

--Wingate Baptist Church¹³⁹

And in October, the Pastor, after apologizing to the congregation for so often asking for money, did it again. Every dollar dedicated to the Fellowship Hall now, will equal three dollars that we would pay on the loan. So, he said, "Shamelessly, I ask again for your gifts on October 8. On that day, the Wingate congregation worshiped among the beams and rafters of the unfinished Fellowship Hall. The roof was on and windows in, but there was no drywall and no lighting. The offering was taken and

¹³⁷ "A Word from Your Pastor," *The Chrysalis*, November 1, 1995.

¹³⁸ "A Word from Your Pastor," *The Chrysalis*, August 16, 1995.

¹³⁹ "A Word from Your Pastor," *The Chrysalis*, August 30, September 6, 1995.

counted, and Jim again in amazement announced that cash and pledges totaled \$83,504.40. Seven-year-old Daniel Sykes shouted: "We're rich!" The next *Chrysalis* commented:

...I think that, through the years, as Daniel eats supper in that building on Wednesday nights, enjoys homemade ice cream out on the brick terrace, comes to youth activities in that place and (who knows?) maybe even has his wedding reception there, he will come to understand that this building belongs to him and his family as much as anything else he might own. It belongs to all of us. And as long as we can remember to share it with each other and the community, then Daniel is right: We're rich!¹⁴⁰

On December 31, 1995, the new Fellowship Hall was ready to host the congregation for the next Wednesday Nights *Alive!* A record number of 168 came for supper and more arrived for Christian educational activities.

The New Year began with the congregation in a comfortable mode. They explored and enjoyed the new Fellowship Hall and dedicated it to the glory of God on May 5. The Mid-Winter Bible Study concentrated on the Old Testament book of Amos, led by Dr. Judy Skeen, Minister of Education at Immanuel Baptist in Nashville. Baptist Men and Baptist Women led worship on their designated Sundays. Several church members experienced an unforgettable trip to the Holy Land in February, led by the pastor. Jim had visited Israel in 1994, and now shared Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Jericho, Masada, the Sea of Galilee, Cana, and Tiberias with Walter and Phyllis Woodson, Gene and Edna Morgan, Peggy Connell, Grace Daniels, Anne McConnell, Jessie Mae Helms, Betty Griffin, and Glenda Spivey. Upon their return, the congregation heard all the humorous travel stories as well as the near-disaster kind and enjoyed pictures and slide shows galore.

March brought challenges, some expected, but others a surprise. Both Glenda Spivey, Church Secretary, and Brenda Tomberlin, Day Care Director, announced their retirement from long service to the congregation. Deacons recommended a six-week sabbatical leave for the pastor for rest, renewal, and study. The Properties Committee recommended replacement of the heating and air conditioning system in the sanctuary at an estimated cost of \$65,000.¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ "A Word from Your Pastor," *The Chrysalis*, October 11, 1995.

¹⁴¹ "A Word from Your Pastor," *The Chrysalis*, March 20, 1996.

Melody Revell was employed as Church Secretary in April, effectively maintaining the work of that office in a seamless manner. The more difficult of these changes involved the Day Care. The problem was primarily economic because the Day Care rooms were small, mandating smaller groups but requiring more teachers and hence higher faculty costs. The state accreditation requirements mandated better playground equipment than what had previously been installed. That cost alone would be \$30,000 to \$50,000 before 1999. So the congregation faced a decision. The Day Care was a ministry to the community, but it would not be self-supporting from its fees without pricing itself beyond the reach of some who used and needed the program. But how much could the congregation underwrite? A forum of parents, day care staff, and church members discussed the issues in April and examined possible solutions. With a strong affirmation of the importance of the ministry, the Day Care Committee was charged to develop a workable plan. In May, Sally Williams, a Wingate resident experienced in Day Care administration, accepted the responsibility for bringing our program into full state accreditation and attacking the economic challenges. The Wingate Church did not abolish or compromise its ministry to children.

Even though hot summer temperatures slowed life considerably in Wingate and the inevitable warm worship services convinced most members that new A/C was necessary however expensive, the programs of the congregation did not suffer from lack of interest and challenge. For the summer, church members could choose Sylvia Little-Sweat's "Film and Faith," "Promise Keepers," led by Billy Hargett, Cheryl Lane's "The Screwtape Letters of C.S. Lewis," "Cottage Prayer Meetings," led by Sid and Myzelle Fletcher, John Sykes' "Faith and Fiction," or Greg Bell's cutting-edge "Online Bible Study" which could include those away from Wingate but close to their laptop computers.

Three Wingate families, Mike and Sharon Chudalski, Bill and Carolyn Braswell, and Chris and Laura Ponds hosted a pair of Belarussian children for their six week stay in the United States. These children of Chernobyl benefited from rest, recreation, and health care during their stay. Beloved former pastor Dewey Hobbs began a six-week interim in the pulpit in late June while Jim was at Baylor University in Texas on his sabbatical leave. Wingate Good Timers relished an old friend in Dewey, and the new members came to know "the man behind the legend." But before leaving, Jim planted a seed, born of a dream, either while sleeping or in deep meditation: "a dream about paying off our debt on the new

building by the year 2000.” How might we do it? Bake sales or bonds or BBQs—one church member quipped: “we could sell barbecue to the Methodists, since they built their new fellowship hall by selling barbecue to us!” Or we might practice real stewardship. At this point it was only a dream.¹⁴²

In July, the second Wingate group of fifteen youth traveled to Murfreesboro, NC, for PASSPORT: Bible study and missions work under the theme “Face your World.” David interpreted the theme as getting outside the walls of our churches to see and address the real problems of today’s world and secondly, putting a face of real people on the problems—world hunger becomes a hungry child. Once again PASSPORT was an instrument of change in young lives.

As summer became fall, more personnel changes occurred and, again, some surprises, some expected. Ann Williams, having served the congregation as Organist during parts of five decades, retired to a less regular schedule of musical responsibilities. The congregation held a special event to express its gratitude for her faithful service. Ann continued to play on special occasions, and sometimes for weddings and funerals, but Polly Bostic assumed the position as Church Organist and Wingate was again blessed with the talent of a creative musician. At the end of September, Cheryl Lane resigned in anticipation of her marriage to Shawn Greenwood. While Cheryl’s sojourn in Wingate was only a few years, everyone acknowledged her contribution. Wednesday Nights *Alive!* will live long in the Wingate program as a comprehensive experience for the whole family—whether a single or multi-generational. Walter Woodson was appointed as interim with particular responsibility for Sunday School, Wednesday Nights *Alive!* and visitation.

Despite four personnel changes in six months, the congregation did not miss a beat. When Hurricane Fran struck Wilmington, Wingate’s Baptist Men, Andy Small, Billy Hargett, Bob Billinger, and the pastor, joined hundreds of others to become disaster volunteers, discovering that “having a common enemy makes kinfolk of us all; we labor together beside brothers and sisters we have never met before, united in our effort to clean up the damage...and discerning a model that would break down the barriers between nations and classes and races and link arms in

¹⁴² *The Chrysalis*, May 29, June 5, 1996; “A Word from Your Pastor,” *The Chrysalis*, June 12, 1996.

an effort to save the world.”¹⁴³ A church camping trip to Cane Creek in September opened new experiences for some members. Also Sally Williams’ Weekday Children’s Ministries Fall Festival in October offered games, face painting, a petting zoo and pony rides to the Day Care children and parents.

Meanwhile, Jim’s little seed of a debt-free year 2000 was taking root as a concrete plan. It called for a \$75,000 reduction of the debt each year. Over \$15,000 extra had already been given in 1996, leaving \$59,973 for an All Saints’ Day offering, featuring memorial gifts for those in the great cloud of witnesses who discern great things happening for God in the Wingate congregation. The day began with a huge turn-out—419 people in the worship service. Tom Lowery began the service with a hymn sing of favorites; Carolyn Gaddy reminded the congregation of courageous men and women who, by faith, set a course for the Wingate congregation in missions and in the founding of Wingate University in 1896, exactly a century earlier. Walter Perry told stories of recent saints who have graced our presence and enhanced our service to God. Jim preached on Hebrews 12:1-2 and “the great crowd of witnesses” surrounding us. The offering met the challenge: \$62,891. Monday’s mail brought another thousand and a telephone call to the pastor asked: “How much did we raise yesterday? When Jim answered proudly, the voice said. “Let’s make it an even \$100,000.”¹⁴⁴ Dreams can become visions which inspire the extraordinary!

Another New Year rolled around, and the ministries of the church remained vital. The Good Timers regularly traveled and learned; more people discovered the excitement of Christian family night on Wednesday. Jim realized that his two trips to the Holy Land had enlivened his imagination, so in March he next followed the trail of the Apostle Paul in the Mediterranean world, visiting Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens and Corinth. Melody Revell and her husband moved to Georgia and Karen Nash assumed the responsibilities of Church Secretary in late May.

The Personnel Committee discussed the current vacancy in the education ministry, realizing that the church’s needs appeared different, thanks to the enthusiastic work of Cheryl Lane. While maintaining the existing momentum, we needed to strengthen those initiatives with “a

¹⁴³ “A Word from Your Pastor,” *The Chrysalis*, September 18, 1996.

¹⁴⁴ “A Word from Your Pastor,” *The Chrysalis*, November 13, 1996.

person who can maintain the smooth operation of our Wednesday night program but also be available to visit, to counsel, to teach; a person who can assist the pastor in meeting the needs of a growing, changing church.”¹⁴⁵ The church approved the conversion of the position to Associate Pastor and in May, Blythe Taylor was called to fill it. Blythe was a graduate of Meredith College and the Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond. She was ordained to the ministry by her home church, Forest Hills Baptist in Raleigh. She came with the highest recommendations of her professors and with significant experience including two years as Associate Pastor at a large Disciples of Christ congregation in Richmond.

The summer opened the door for Vacation Bible School and a Spaghetti Lunch after worship to honor the high school graduates and raise money for this year’s youth travel to PASSPORT. Summer Small Groups on Wednesday again included interesting topics: Cottage Prayer Meetings, “Dead (Christian) Poets Society,” led by John Sykes, “Beginning Fly Fishing” with Bob Lindsay, “Christian Drama,” directed by Larry Coleman, “Sacred Storytelling” with Jim Somerville, and Summer Reading under Carolyn Braswell and Jane Harris.

The first anniversary of Sally Williams’ tenure as Weekday Children’s Ministries (a new name) noted significant milestones, including a graduation ceremony for preschoolers, a monthly newsletter for parents, no staff turnover, a face-lift of new paint, carpet and curtains, and new office equipment. And there was more: a scholarship fund for needy families, new playground equipment, raises for all daycare staff, and best of all, the program operated in the black and received a state AA rating for its daycare program, after-school program, and the summer day camp.¹⁴⁶ This ministry was now irreplaceable in the Wingate community. One grateful parent wrote:

We just wanted to take the opportunity to let you know how much we have appreciated our daughters being a part of the daycare. It is not just a daycare to us though, it is a wonderful, loving, challenging, learning, Godly driven “home-away-from-home” for our girls....We are so proud, just as you are, of all the wonderful and exciting changes which have been taking place. The daycare has changed many children’s lives over the years and we can truly

¹⁴⁵ “A Word from Your Pastor, *The Chrysalis*, April 30, 1997; Church Conference Minutes, May 4, 1997.

¹⁴⁶ “A Word from Your Pastor,” *The Chrysalis*, July 2, 1997.

say that our girls' changes have been the most positive blessings we could have ever received.¹⁴⁷

August brought the usual flurry of late summer activities as fall approached: a last trip to the beach, a Youth Car Wash to buy school supplies for the Trailer Park Mission kids, a late afternoon clean-up, fix-up at the mission, and the annual Great Lemonade Giveaway to refresh parents and students as they moved into university housing. And a new initiative struck a positive note: several adults prepared for a mission trip to South Africa in October-- Harvey and Macie Michael, Ed Nash (Harvey's uncle), Tom Lowery, Jerry Thomas, Linda Odom, Chris Ponds, and Jim Somerville. By assisting these missionaries with expenses, the Wingate congregation was "empowering people for ministry," strengthening and encouraging the churches of South Africa.

Yet the congregation was feeling the weight of a \$348,000 budget, including \$30,000 for debt retirement. Collections in the summer and fall were running somewhat behind, and the All Saints Day goal of \$50,000 more to pay down the debt seemed daunting. The people came, they sang, they remembered the saints of Wingate Baptist in their own lives, and they gave. The regular budget received an infusion of more than \$10,000 and the debt retirement another \$25,000. But the lofty goal was not met. Still the day was joyful and the pastor reflected: "Some of those saints of yesteryear would find such an offering [of more than \$35,000] staggering, almost unbelievable, and yet they would simultaneously urge us to press on toward the future. The God who has made some of our biggest dreams come true may have bigger dreams for us yet."¹⁴⁸

The celebration of Advent was particularly strong in 1997, highlighted by the choral performance of "The Hope of His Coming," which concluded with the beloved "Hallelujah Chorus." The affirmation of Christ's Second Coming was heightened as the congregation once again remembered the babe in a manger who was God's loving gift to the world, even Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Just as 1997 had been a year of stabilization as the Church called new staff to positions of responsibility, so 1998 began as a year to renew initiatives. In December and January, the congregation was introduced,

¹⁴⁷ "A Word from Your Pastor," *The Chrysalis*, June 25, 1997, writer unknown.

¹⁴⁸ "A Word from Your Pastor," *The Chrysalis*, November 5, 1997.

via photograph and commentary, to its two Ukrainian home missionaries: first, Vasily Kopiletz, pastor in Rudniki and nearby villages, with his wife and seven children and then Nikolay Kukushkin, who preached in three places: Yampol, Teplik and Klembovka and was opening another work in Pisarevka. The congregation's direct financial support enabled these pastors to bring the good news of God's love and forgiveness to "a lot of people that never heard about Christ."

Jim was again driving and dreaming (fortunately all the drivers on Interstate 85 from Winston-Salem to Charlotte recognized him and gave him plenty of highway space). He proposed several new ideas for engaging in missions and one caught fire: "Adopt-a-People-Group." We would select 18 different groups of people worldwide who have had little or no exposure to the news of Christ and God's love. A church member would have two minutes before the congregation to make the case that this unreached group needed our daily individual prayers and those of the congregation in worship. The congregation would select the most convincing presentation, and begin a concentrated effort to learn more about them, pray for them regularly, and stay in touch with CBF missionaries who work with them. On February 11, the church chose the Lampungese peoples of Indonesia and began to discover strangers who needed the gospel. Interestingly, when the CBF of North Carolina formulated means for increasing missions involvement, one suggestion to all churches was the Adopt-a-People program. Our pastor was a member of the Strategic Planning Task Force which articulated the values, mission, and goals of the developing state fellowship.

In a later newsletter, the congregation learned that this ethnic group in Indonesia was composed of several groups, some historic head-hunting and raiding tribes and others who lived by fishing and agriculture. Their area had endured years of general unrest caused by lack of trust in their government. Most were Orthodox Muslims, but they also preserved significant folk beliefs in ghosts and spirits. In a population of 2 million, fewer than 60 people were known Christians. But the culture was opening to outsiders, particularly Javanese, many of whom were Christians. The Wingate congregation had the opportunity to pray that the Christian gospel will flourish among these people.¹⁴⁹ In mid-summer, the congregation formally adopted the Lampungese people in a service

¹⁴⁹ "A Word from Your Pastor, *The Chrysalis*, March 18, 1998.

led by Steve Johnson, a CBF missionary to these Indonesian people. Johnson later commented:

The service itself was the highlight of our trip [to the United States]. The morning's worship bulletin was designed like a birth announcement, setting the theme for this morning and preparing people to take responsibility for the "adoption." The people of the church were excited and welcomed us warmly. The music, scripture, and other portions of the service brought forth the challenge for the church to reach out beyond itself and look to share the gospel with people who did not have an opportunity to hear the story of what Christ has done for all of us. When the time came for signing the covenant, it seemed a natural extension of our worship experience.

As we watched the people flood the altar to sign their name to the covenant, we were moved beyond words. It is hard to express how important it is for us to have experienced a tangible expression of this church's support of this crucial work. For those working on the field, there is a danger of feeling separated from supporters and somewhat alone at times, but as we left the service that morning, we felt so strongly a part of a larger team, and still to this day, talk about how wonderful that morning was.¹⁵⁰

Another important matter facing the congregation was its relationship with the Southern Baptist Convention. In recent years, Wingate Baptist was painfully aware of the politicization of the Convention and its movement away from historic concepts of congregational autonomy, its persistence in preserving a male hegemony within both the local church and on the mission field, and its demand for conformity to creedal doctrine for seminary professors and missionaries. Yet our church had been a participating member since the founding of the Convention in 1845. We rerouted our contributions in the late 1980s and moved closer to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship as it developed and matured. But a number of Wingate members did not wish to sever the historic relationship. Then the SBC drew the line in the sand: churches would be considered members only if they contributed to SBC causes. Since we had voted several years ago to use other means to distribute our mission funds, only a reversal of policy could maintain the relationship. The recommendation from the Affiliations Committee to break with the SBC was discussed. An amendment to reverse the recommendation was offered and seconded, but failed to carry a

¹⁵⁰ Steve Johnson, *The Chrysalis*, August 19, 1998.

majority. By ballot vote of 112 to 20, the Wingate congregation severed all connections to the Southern Baptist Convention.¹⁵¹

In March, the congregation under the leadership of Blythe Taylor, launched a new and third venture in worship called "The Faithful Gathering," described as "A Contemporary Worship Experience" and held on Saturday evening at 6pm. Blythe described the first service:

The evening was a great success. David Sherwood, Sid Fletcher, Lynn Lewis and Michelle Moser led so beautifully in this worship. Just seeing the passionate look on Michelle's face as she sang to God—truly from her heart—made all of my previous nervousness worth it. Together we DID worship.

Together we also learned. We began a study on the gospel of John. We learned about the power of truly living as children of God. We committed to striving to be witnesses to God's light, life and love in our lives. Thank you to those of you who attended this service....to those of you who prayed for the service...to you who have asked how it went...You are invited to come worship with us.¹⁵²

Lots of good things were happening among the youth of the church. In late April, eleven young people were baptized: Adam Austin, Suzanne Bostic, Steven Cox, Chris Jones, Ellie Somerville, Trae Steele, Lauren Steele, Callie Stegall, Daniel Sykes, Kyle Wallace, and Jennifer Larrimore. In June, the Vacation Bible School emphasized the theme: "Celebrate Freedom," a study of Baptist distinctive beliefs, and concluded with a "Beach Blowout" commencement party, featuring Hawaiian leis and hot dogs. The older youth were preparing for another PASSPORT with the now-expected Spaghetti Luncheon after worship as a fundraiser. Each participant must have completed at least six hours of community service prior to the trip. This year the group of twenty traveled to Stetson University in Deland, Florida for their Bible study and hands-on missions. Scheduled for this year were Habitat for Humanity projects, reading to children, painting houses, and general clean-up chores; then came the Bible study and fun time.

Meanwhile, summer study groups offered a wide range of growth experiences in fellowship with Christians, from "Classics of Devotional Literature" under Joe Larrimore, to "Random Acts of Kindness" led by Chris Billinger, to "Christian High Adventure," including whitewater

¹⁵¹ Church Conference Minutes, December 27, 1997, February 15, 1998; *The Chrysalis*, February 4, 11, 15, 1998.

¹⁵² "A Word from your Associate Pastor," *The Chrysalis*, March 18, 1998.

rafting, indoor rock climbing and backpacking with the pastor. The restless Good Timers traveled to Pigeon Forge, TN to conclude their summer wanderings. Too soon it was Great Lemonade Giveaway time again as Wingate University opened its door for another year.

The fall passed quickly. On September 2, we went online at www.dasia.net/wbc with information, programs, pictures, and our vision of serving Christ. The congregation received a letter from Vasily Kopiletz, one of our Ukrainian home missionaries addressed: "Dear God's children from Christ's church in Wingate," expressing thanks for assistance.

...in your help to us we do not just have resources to live and work. We have also big encouragement and to serve our Lord even more. And we would be so happy if you could come one day to see what God is doing in our area. Through your involvement into God's ministry in Ukraine God shows us and in spite of such difficult times for our country He is God almighty.¹⁵³

Another letter from Nikolay Kukushkin, pastor of three rural Ukrainian churches, revealed his efforts to rebuild churches destroyed by Communism:

Couple of years ago [in the village of Teplyck] there were just 12 members in this church, and today we have 37....the church in village of Klembouka...had 17, and now 51 members....We are working on a construction of church buildings in villages where people have never heard the Gospel because of lack of missionaries.¹⁵⁴

High attendance Sunday in October did not break records, but the numbers were solid: 239 in Sunday School and 278 in worship. As a part of All Saints' Day, 1998, the church gathered after worship for a fund-raising "Rice Dinner," featuring all kinds of rice dishes and highlighting the Lampungese peoples, our adopted unreached people of Indonesia. The event resulted in over \$3,000 to be forwarded to the Johnsons to buy rice for the poor. In December, the pastor challenged the congregation to "tithe a week's income" in our offering for Global Missions. According to the WMU report in January, a total of \$10,150 was given for the year. Jim commented: "The congregation was challenged to give its best offering ever and it did. It doesn't surprise me at all. It only makes me proud to be pastor of such a missions-minded church." The budget report for 1998

¹⁵³ Vasily Kopiletz, *The Chrysalis*, September 16, 1998.

¹⁵⁴ Nikolay Kukushkin, *The Chrysalis*, November 4, 1998.

was overwhelming—the church met 100% of its budget and had over \$9,000 surplus. The fellowship hall construction cost of \$640,000 and another \$100,000 to replace the heat and air conditioning system in the sanctuary had been reduced to a total current debt of \$165,500, raising new conversation of burning the note in year 2000.¹⁵⁵

The annual Christmas music was “Shine On: a Children’s Christmas Musical Drama” performed by the Children’s Choir. In the final Faithful Gathering of the year, Harvey Michael shared a pearl of wisdom: “Life is like riding a bicycle. If you slow down, you wobble and if you stop, you fall.” Wingate Christians were in no danger of either hazard.

Actually, early in 1999 Jim described the last three years as ‘a time of catching our breath, enjoying the new building, and relaxing a little.’ Now it is time to dream again, he said, in presenting a planning process he called “ReVision.” On January 10 the congregation completed a long survey on things like worship style, social issues, music preference, community concerns, and mission emphasis. The materials were sent to a company specializing in analysis. They would add demographic and projection data so that the congregation might discern new local opportunities for ministry. Several Wednesday Nights would allow reflection on church priorities and formulation of broad goals to guide the church for the next few years.¹⁵⁶

Missions possibilities continued to surface among the Youth. For the third consecutive year they sponsored the “Souper Bowl.” On the Sunday of the Big Game of the Year, they asked each worshiper to contribute one dollar in a soup pot with all contributions going directly to the Union County Homeless Shelter. One Saturday a month, the youth traveled to the Elizabethan Garden Retirement Home to assist residents with hair washing and other personal tasks. With other local Youth groups, they also helped staff the Union Baptist Association’s Summer Day Camp for at-risk and disadvantaged children.

In February, the Somervilles moved into their new home at 110 Creekview Lane in Wingate. Both Jim and Christy invested much “sweat equity” in the clearing, construction, and clean-up and a number of church members pitched in as able. And the WMU hosted a party “in memory of our pastor’s youth, on March 14, his Fortieth Birthday.” Upon

¹⁵⁵ *The Chrysalis*, February 3, 1999.

¹⁵⁶ “A Word from your Pastor,” *The Chrysalis*, January 6, 1999.

Karen Nash's resignation as Church Secretary, Angie Trull was employed in that capacity in late March.

From Steve and Elizabeth Johnson came good news that movement toward Christianity was beginning to appear among the Lampungese! Steve reported that two teenage girls had become believers and a number of locals were responding and offering to assist in the humanitarian effort. The food distribution made possible by our "Rice Dinner" assisted over 500 poor families. In Indonesia, US\$1,000 purchased 3 tons of rice and a half ton each of sugar and cooking oil. That was indeed good news! The two CBF missionaries visited Wingate again in April, strengthening the congregational commitment to this worthy cause of the gospel.

The local missions ministry made a significant forward step in the cooperation of Union Baptist churches to assist El Buen Pastor, the Spanish-speaking church named "The Good Shepherd," to build a facility for the congregation already averaging 70 people and crowds reaching over 100. First Baptist, Marshville took the lead by pledging to match the first \$20,000 contributed by Union churches, and Wingate members responded with a contribution of \$1,417. The Association churches met the challenge. The Trailer Park Mission decided to transport the children to our facility on Wednesdays and Saturdays because the rent on the trailer space was raised 33%. The Church Council considered several options but never questioned its resolve to continue the ministry.¹⁵⁷

Summertime in Wingate was only slightly slower than usual. Smallgroup sessions, designed to increase personal relationships and interaction, offered intriguing possibilities: "Beginning Spanish," "PrayerReach," "Wingate Walkers," "Sunday Afternoon 'Romp,'" and the "Golden Years." Vacation Bible School, directed by Linda McMahan, explored a "Jungle Journey" theme while including study of God's promises, crafts, music, and recreation. The Youth PASSPORT missions trip again allowed a large percentage of Wingate young people to experience hands-on missions activity, Bible study, and group interaction. It was noted in the Church Council that the cumulative effect of five years of PASSPORT has resulted in many more of our young people volunteering for local mission activity. The program is a highlight of our association with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and clearly has

¹⁵⁷ *The Chrysalis*, February 17, March 31, April 7, 28, 1999; Church Council Minutes, March 28, April 25, 1999.

strengthened missions participation in the congregation. The pastor, as national coordinator for the CBF Adopt-a-People initiative, traveled to Indonesia to learn firsthand of the circumstances of the people of Lampung. He witnessed the advances of these humanitarian missionaries and the positive impact of the Christian message. But he also saw tremendous needs among these people and the challenges facing those in ministry.¹⁵⁸

The return of Wednesday Night Alive! in late August signaled the end of summer vacations and new opportunities for growth in grace and in living together. Special sessions were announced on cake decoration, family health issues, and the women around Jesus to supplement the regular Bible study, musical groups for all ages, and prayer. Later workshops included "Clearing Away the Clutter [of our physical and spiritual lives]," "The Devotional Life," "The Roller Coaster of Grief" and "Learning Sign Language." A "mini-revival" was announced for September featuring nationally known singer, songwriter, and theologian Kyle Matthews, hoping to attract a number of college students. A late summer retreat of the Church Council at Caraway to plan for the fall and spring produced lots of interesting ideas: could another Habitat house be constructed in Wingate? What about a "Hanging of the Greens" Sunday in early December, a WatchNight service on New Year's Eve, or a new state partnership with other NC Baptists on a mission trip to Alaska? All of these and more could happen in Wingate.

But a darkening cloud appeared on the horizon. The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina Committee on Committees voted 9-8 not to recommend for committee assignment any Baptist "whose church does not [financially] support the Southern Baptist Convention," despite the fact that the state constitution "clearly states that there is no direct connection between the SBC and the BSCNC." The Wingate church consistently gave to state missions supporting such efforts as our children's homes and disaster relief. The church protested this action even as it continued to send its funds to the agency. In late September, Hurricane Floyd dumped days of driving rain on eastern North Carolina, flooding rivers, homes, and businesses of the coastal plain. Wingate and other Baptists cooperated in relief efforts, initially providing food and shelter and later the long task of clean-up and rebuilding. Wingate's

¹⁵⁸ "A Word from Your Pastor," *The Chrysalis*, June 23, June 9, July 7, 1999; Church Council Minutes, July 25, 1999.

Baptist Men were assigned to help around Tarboro and then Princeville, where flood waters reached within a foot of the ceiling in many houses. Volunteer teams traveled eastward on five separate weekends during the fall of 1999.¹⁵⁹

As All Saints' Day and Homecoming approached, the possibilities of retiring the debt again became a topic of conversation. Spring special gifts reduced the total to \$119,315 and a payoff would save \$27,000 per year in interest payments. Could the note be burned on New Year's Eve of the millennium? The Fifth & Sixth Grade Sunday School class asked church members to donate their loose change which the children would count, roll, and give to the cause. The spirit of giving was catching. Promotion of this unusually high goal in giving was low-key but persistent, with suggestions that members might memorialize a saint in their past, or give in honor of a living person of the Wingate church who has blessed them. Or members might sell something not needed, or resist buying an unessential item. One hundred people/families giving \$1,000 each would do it, Jim wrote in *The Chrysalis*, and he and his family were trying hard to be one of the hundred. When the counting was over, the total came to slightly more than \$50,000 and allowed no burning of the note.¹⁶⁰ Was there disappointment? yes, but discouragement? no. The end of the huge borrowing of three-quarters of a million dollars five years earlier was clearly in sight. In fact, the congregation relived an incident in the life of the prophet Jeremiah: in the midst of hardship and difficulties, Jeremiah purchased a field near Jerusalem which he never expected to see, but on which he believed that his descendants would plant vineyards and build houses (Jeremiah 32). On December 12, 1999 the Wingate Church purchased the Anne McConnell house and property adjacent to the DayCare playground for \$41,200.¹⁶¹

A New Year's Eve ushering in a new millennium last occurred a thousand years ago. At a special New Year's Eve party, Wingate Baptist celebrated by baptizing six young people: Molly Braswell, William Maye, Elizabeth Maye, Tommy Odom, Blair Stegall, and Andrew Small. With these new disciples, the congregation sang and offered prayers of thanksgiving and intercession. In the first moments of the new

¹⁵⁹ "No Representation for Wingate Baptist?" and "After the Storm..." *The Chrysalis*, September 1, 22, 1999.

¹⁶⁰ *The Chrysalis*, November 3, 10, 1999.

¹⁶¹ Church Conference Minutes, December 12, 1999.

millennium, the people of God joined voices in praise with "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee," then moved to the fellowship hall for food and conversation and fun for the children. The gathering set the proper tone for another thousand years or until a time of God's own choosing.

The congregation had already shouldered a mighty task: a year 2000 budget of \$394,194, the largest in Wingate's history. It provided new initiatives in Christian education, pastoral ministry, staff support, and reduction of deferred maintenance of facilities. The budget was ambitious, but it was also important and reasonable in order for the church to move forward in its mission. Jim was able to show that the increase was still less than the total giving in 1999. Including the unbudgeted gifts dedicated to the building fund, the Wingate congregation placed more than \$425,000 in the offering plates during the year. The fellowship hall debt stood at about \$60,000 so a payoff was still possible in 2000. It looked big, but the congregation accepted the challenge.¹⁶²

Christian education and missions continued on a steady pace. Adults at Wednesday Nights Alive! could choose from Walter Woodson's sessions on "Your Aging Parents," Joe Larrimore's theological probing of "Leslie Weatherhead's *The Will of God*," or "Finding Your Family: Ancestral History" led by Jerry Surratt and Jerry Kirkman. The Baptist Men partnered with a family who had lost their home in Hurricane Floyd. North Carolina Baptist Men and the Wingate congregation covered the restoration costs of new floors, drywall, carpet, electrical work, and painting and our men did the work. In March, twenty-three women of the church went on a weekend retreat to Camp Caswell, featuring sessions by Edie Perry "Rearing a Christian Child in a Wild World," Linda Isner "Developing Relationships across the Generations," Jane Harris, "Laughter in the Christian Life," and Blythe Taylor "Finding Joy in the Routine."¹⁶³ Good Timer trips for the spring included the Schiele Museum in Gastonia, The Bob Timberlake Gallery in Lexington with Davidson County BBQ, and the Butterfly House and Museum of Life and Science in Durham.

Steve and Elizabeth Johnson, CBF missionaries in Indonesia, visited Wingate again, sharing their experience among the Lampungese

¹⁶² "A Word from Your Pastor," *The Chrysalis*, February 16, 2000; Church Conference Minutes, December 12, 1999.

¹⁶³ *The Chrysalis*, February 2, 2000.

people. Our gift offering for this program totaled \$3,070 to assist in caring for these extremely poor and unreached people. Holy Week this year included a *Tenebrae* service on Thursday which

...was powerfully moving—the choir shouting “Crucify him!” at the top of their voices, the ground shaking with the low bass notes and crashing chords of a simulated “earthquake,” the candles being extinguished one by one and the congregation leaving in darkness and silence. A hush fell not only over the room, but over our individual souls, those of us who were there.

Some of us also attended the Easter sunrise service where we huddled together for warmth in the pre-dawn chill. Jennifer Hoerning ushered us into the spirit of worship with a beautiful solo. Blythe Taylor spoke eloquently of the “difference” that Easter makes. And then—as people remarked later—there was a divine convergence of worship and wonder as we bowed for the benediction and then looked up, moments later, to see the sun peeking over the tops of the trees. It was as if God had been waiting until we were through with our part...to do his part.¹⁶⁴

On May 21, the congregation received Jim Somerville’s letter of resignation to become the pastor of the First Baptist Church of the City of Washington, DC.

I want you to know that I did not seek this position. I want you to know that I have turned down many other invitations. I want you to know that I have been at Wingate for nine years because I am convinced there is no finer church, and there are no finer people, anywhere in the world. I go from here to a church that has fallen on hard times, and to a congregation that is hurting and confused. They believe I have the right kind of gifts to help them become healthy and strong again. I hope they are right and I pray that I am right in sensing God’s clear call to this new assignment.¹⁶⁵

Most members of the congregation were surprised by Jim’s announcement. One always assumes that the yesterday’s circumstances and momentum will be present tomorrow. Wingate had drawn inspiration and strength from its pastor and had responded to him and to God in amazing ways. But Baptists believe in congregational autonomy and the constitution provided the procedure for a change of leadership. From a roster of eligible church members, the congregation on June 11 nominated candidates, and on June 18, they selected a Pastor Search Committee by secret ballot. Carolyn Braswell, Tom Crooke, Jennifer

¹⁶⁴ “A Word from your Pastor,” *The Chrysalis*, April 26, 2000.

¹⁶⁵ *The Chrysalis*, May 24, 2000.

Hoerning, Don Merrill, and Max Thomas were elected. The committee's first responsibility was to ensure that after July 2, the church would fulfill its responsibilities through the current staff and fill the pulpit with a speaker or an interim pastor. Reverend Paul Baxley, currently Campus Minister at Wingate, agreed to serve as interim. He would lead worship two or three times monthly with Blythe preaching once a month. Paul and Blythe would share the pastoral care needs of the congregation.¹⁶⁶

Wingate honored the Somerville family with a "Love Offering" and a "Covered Dish Luncheon" on July 2nd. Many words of appreciation were spoken and written on both sides, recognizing the truth of Jim's "Last Word" in *The Chrysalis*:

As I have often said, "relationships are the most important things in the world, and the only things that really last." If that is true then the time we have spent opening our lives to each other in the last nine years has not been wasted, and the friendships we have formed are ones that will last forever.

For nine years the Wingate congregation knew Jim Somerville as a dreamer and visionary who worked incessantly and inspired others to make dreams come true. Blythe Taylor in April 2000 had referred in *The Chrysalis* to her favorite poet, Langston Hughes, quoting from his poem entitled "Dreams." Hughes' words captures truth for both Jim Somerville and the Wingate Baptist Church:

Hold fast to dreams,
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶ Church Conference Minutes, June 18, 2000; *The Chrysalis*, June 28, 2000.

¹⁶⁷ "A Word from Your Associate Pastor," *The Chrysalis*, April 12, 2000; Langston Hughes, *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes*, New York: Alfred A Knopf/Vintage, 1994.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE NEW MILLENNIUM: LIVING THE GREAT COMMISSION

A new century is rare, a new millennium beyond conception. Did the next thousand years begin in 2000 or 2001? We celebrated the first with the world and again with those who insisted that zero completed the prior decade and one started the new. We stood amazed to consider how far humankind had advanced since AD 1001, yet some said even the next twenty years would make the 20th century seem old fashioned. But first, the Wingate Baptist Church needed a new pastor.

Paul Baxley, University Campus Minister, was no stranger to a Baptist pulpit. He had served as Associate Pastor in Henderson, NC, prior to coming to Wingate, and he immediately captured the appreciation of the Wingate congregation, young and old. His sermons were thought-provoking and delivered in an intimate, caring manner. Blythe Taylor carried the burden of the pastoral care and the two staff leaders worked effectively together. Other staff continued to perform with great professional competence, while Wingate maintained its progress and multiple ministries during the fifteen months of the interim.

Even as the Pastor Search Committee began to sift through recommendations and resumes, the life of the congregation continued its normal pace and rhythm. A group of 23 Youth went to PASSPORT and returned enthusiastic to assist Linda Odom with the Trailer Park ministry. The Weekday Children's Ministry received a AAA rating from the state, thanks to the hard work of Sally Williams and the faculty. Kyle Matthews, contemporary Christian musician and storyteller, agreed to return to Wingate in September. The congregation initiated a ministry to single adults with Ameer Huneycutt as the coordinator and the University Ministry received a much needed and appreciated injection of enthusiasm from Chuck and Carol Taylor and two Student Co-ordinators: Nick Roberts and Travis Stegall. The ministry attracted new participants every week. Likewise, the Good Timers were active, with a group of 34 visiting Mount Airy, famed for its "Mayberry" days. The Church Council discussed a lengthy list of minor but important problems with the aging physical plant. The parking lot was patched, locks fixed, gutters cleaned and repaired, the McConnell house painted, and the old parsonage cleaned and spruced up. The more expensive projects required pricing and specific action of the church.

Late in the year, Blythe Taylor resigned her position as Associate Pastor to accept a similar post at Saint John's Baptist Church in Charlotte, effective in January, 2001. The church expressed its appreciation for her faithful and creative service and wished her well in her new challenge. To fulfill the pastoral care needs, the congregation appointed a "Care Committee" of retired ministers and deacons, led by Joe Larrimore, for hospital visitation and other pastoral needs as necessary. In December, the congregation adopted another record budget of \$401,719 and appointed a new committee to study the allocations of our contributions to various mission endeavors. And the outstanding debt on the Fellowship Hall was completely retired in December, 2000.

Again the congregation ushered in the new millennium in 2001, just to be sure the task was complete. Adults shared a Valentine Banquet, and the Youth hit the ski slopes in the North Carolina mountains in February. The congregation debated, first informally and then in conference, the placement of the United States and Christian flags in the sanctuary. The Church Council recommended permanent placement in the foyer, moving them to the dais on national holidays such as President's day, Independence Day, Memorial Day and Veterans Day. By a ballot vote (98-30), the congregation chose to display the flags permanently in the sanctuary.¹⁶⁸ The Interim Pastor commented in *The Chrysalis*:

Christian unity is easiest when everyone agrees. But, it is in times where there is disagreement that we discover how strong our unity is. The greatest threat to unity is not difference of opinion, but an attitude of disrespect, and the more dangerous temptation to respect only those people who agree with us, choosing to question the motive and faith of others.¹⁶⁹

Construction workers and volunteers completed the remodeling of the basement, including another attempt at controlling the moisture problem. The congregation dedicated its Easter missions offering to El Buen Pastor Church, which completed its new sanctuary between Wingate and Monroe, and celebrated its first worship service on Easter Sunday. The building will also function as a Hispanic community center. The Town & Country Trailer Park ministry continued under the leadership of Linda Odom. The children were transported to the Fellowship Hall for

¹⁶⁸ *The Chrysalis*, January 10, 2001; Church Conference Minutes, January 21, 2001.

¹⁶⁹ "From the interim Pastor," *The Chrysalis*, January 24, 2001.

supper and activity twice each month. With the willing assistance of the Youth, the ministry grew to 27 or more children coming to the church on Wednesdays. A twelve-week summer study session was planned for the children to follow the missionary travels of Paul.¹⁷⁰ When Church Secretary Angie Trull and her husband relocated to Garner, NC, Karen Nash returned to the position as Administrative Assistant.¹⁷¹

In June the Renovations Committee made an itemized recommendation of necessary repairs and finishing projects for the sanctuary building. The roof dome needed serious work, and the interior needed painting. Some ceilings were dry-walled and lighting renewed. The balcony railing was improved for better sight lines and strengthened for safety. A new sound system corrected the weak acoustical areas of the sanctuary. All of the projects came to about \$267,839. The church discussed an option for relocation of the entire physical plant but realized that the cost would be prohibitive. Funds budgeted for presently vacant staff positions helped to soften the financial impact. The congregation voted to proceed, engaging Clark Rummage to supervise the various projects.¹⁷² The Great Lemonade Giveaway marked the coming of the fall season as students returned to the university.

As we approached the end of this impressive interim period in the life of the Wingate Baptist, the congregation realized that it had developed a deep emotional affection for Paul Baxley. He had led us through a difficult time and left us stronger than when we began. And the writer of this narrative was equally impressed with the wealth of strength revealed within the congregation. Multiple issues of *The Chrysalis* revealed a variety of strong contributors. Paul wrote many columns, as did Blythe Taylor. Less frequent but equally important contributions came from Ron Bostic, Sally Williams and David Sherwood. And then came others: Carolyn Braswell, Chair of the Pastor Search Committee, C. T. Harris, Chair of the Board of Deacons, Edie Perry, Chair of Properties Committee, Jennifer Hoerning, Choir Member, Nick Roberts, Coordinator of University Ministry, and Carrie Jordan, PASSPORT participant. In July, Paul wrote:

¹⁷⁰ Church Council Minutes, April 22, 2001. *The Chrysalis*, April 18, 2001.

¹⁷¹ Church Conference Minutes, August 19, 2001.

¹⁷² Church Council Minutes, June 24, 2001; Church Conference Minutes, September 30, 2001; *The Chrysalis*, October 3, 2001.

It is hard to believe that over a year has passed since we started this time of interim at Wingate Baptist Church....We have had many opportunities to become impatient, or simply give up. But, the record speaks to the contrary. Unlike what happens in most congregations during interim periods, attendance has held steady and giving has been generous, resulting in the retirement of the church's debt and a series of positive financial reports at church council. Rather than resting and waiting, we are also contemplating a significant renovation of our Sanctuary building....In the absence of full time staff ministers, members of the congregation have stepped forward to help, beyond what is normal, in the area of pastoral care and visitation. Volunteers also worked hard to make Vacation Bible School not only happen, but happen well....I write to congratulate you on seizing the opportunity that this challenging time has held. Your commitment speaks volumes about the strength of this church family and its future.¹⁷³

In the time-honored tradition, our Pastor Search Committee led by Carolyn Braswell, read and listened, traveled and talked. On September 9, 2001 they recommended Dr. Derrill Smith, pastor of the Grace Baptist Church, Asheville, NC to become our senior pastor in these years so laden with promise and hope. Dr. Smith preached for the congregation that day, then we voted immediately to call this man whose God-given hairstyle prepared him for ecclesiastical leadership whether as a monk in England, 1001 or as pastor in Wingate, 2001. We greeted our new pastor, his wife Cindy, son Phillip and daughter Caroline and left the fellowship hall happy with the prospect of new beginnings once again.¹⁷⁴

Two days later was Tuesday, *September 11, 2001*.

Many times we have seen catastrophe on our television screens but usually then the commercials broke in and we went to the kitchen for popcorn and a soda. But on 9/11/2001 no words then or now can encompass the emotions from disbelief to fear, from rage to sorrow flowing through our minds, our families, our congregation, our nation. No...not in America...but yes...it was real.

The terrorist attack caught America and President George W. Bush totally by surprise. The ensuing investigation showed careful planning and execution on a world-wide basis by Arab extremists known as al-Qaeda, led by Saudi millionaire Osama bin Laden. Hijacked commercial airliners struck New York's World Trade Towers and the

¹⁷³ "From the Interim Pastor," *The Chrysalis*, July 18, 2001.

¹⁷⁴ Minutes of the Church Conference, September 9, 2001.

Pentagon; another intended for either The White House or the Capitol crashed in Pennsylvania. Thousands died, including innocent civilians and emergency responders. The aftermath included new awareness of America's vulnerability to terrorists, a cabinet-level Department of Homeland Security, and a world-wide manhunt for terrorists and their leaders, especially in war-torn Afghanistan. Several high-level leaders and organizers were apprehended or killed but bin Laden eluded capture. Bush's entire administration was marked by tragedy, economic problems, and war.

In 2002, President Bush isolated Iraq as a threat to American security because Saddam Hussein was developing "weapons of mass destruction." The United Nations imposed sanctions and inspections upon Iraq, but Hussein did not cooperate to American satisfaction. On March 19, 2003, Bush persuaded Congress to declare war on Iraq. Bagdad fell in three weeks, and victory was declared on May 1, 2003. Years later, as American troops continued to restore order and stability, casualties reached unanticipated heights, no weapons of mass destruction nor their components were ever found, and radical insurgents regained control over parts of the nation. Bush asked for more time and more troops and for America to "stay the course" against terrorism. He received both, but his approval ratings began to tumble in American public opinion. In 2008, American forces were still in Iraq, Saddam Hussein was dead, but al-Qaeda terrorism flourished.

The Iraqi war was Bush's major problem but others increasingly punctured the American dream. The over-extended high-tech sector of the economy, with stock prices inflated into a bubble, suddenly tumbled. The economy in 2002 went into a recession. Prompt action by the Republican administration restored the confidence of Americans and the lower interest rates prompted a surge of consumer buying, much of it on credit cards, slowing the economic decline. The stock market quickly recovered except for a few very risky "dot-com" businesses. Then Hurricane Katrina swept off the Gulf in 2005 and devastated New Orleans. Levees around the city collapsed and 80% of the city was destroyed in flood waters. The entire lower Gulf coast was in shambles. The Federal Emergency Management Agency failed to restore order and get relief to the people who needed it. People waited for days for rescue from rooftops. The Superdome and Convention Center became so crowded that people had no water, food, or sanitary facilities. Looting was rampant and 15% of the New Orleans police force walked off the job.

Years will likely be required to rebuild New Orleans and the coastal area. In 2007, the national housing bubble burst and financial institutions began to report billions in losses as subprime borrowers were unable to meet their debt payments on home mortgages and credit cards. The administration primed the economic pump with cuts in interest rates, direct cash rebates to citizens, and emergency loans to financial institutions in an attempt to stabilize the national economic situation.

North Carolina and Union County were impacted by these national problems. Lines became longer at security checkpoints in the airports. High-tech businesses disappeared or postponed expansion. Gasoline topped \$4.00 per gallon. For Sale signs lingered in yards. But with the negatives, some signs of stability in North Carolina remained. Across the state both political parties remained viable. Elizabeth Dole retained Jesse Helm's seat in the US Senate for the Republicans in 2002, and Democrat Mike Easley served two terms as governor. The 2008 election revealed a grassroots revival of Democrats: Barak Obama carried the state for the first time since Jimmy Carter, Elizabeth Dole lost her Senate seat to Democrat Kay Hagan and locally, Larry Kissell defeated Republican Robin Hayes.

The population of Union County continued to grow rapidly, amid predictions of 203,000 residents by 2010. Experts believe growth will reach 35% in the next decade, making Union the fastest growing county in North Carolina and the home of 275,000 inhabitants by 2020. The current decade's net growth rate of 9% is expected to rise to 24% in the next.¹⁷⁵ Wingate University has begun to expand its curricula in health care, moving many of the programs closer to Charlotte medical communities, including planned facilities for the School of Pharmacy and the program for Physician's Assistants. The main campus anticipates moderate expansion in both quantity and quality of undergraduate students. Growth of this magnitude in Union County, the town, and the university will offer increased opportunities for ministry by Wingate Baptist Church.

Derrill Smith began his tenure as Wingate's pastor with a series of sermons on expectations—"expectations that I perceive that you have of me as your pastor and the expectations that I have of you." And he invited dialogue and discussion of ideas on Wednesday evenings. "So, let's journey together in the exciting but challenging work of building

¹⁷⁵ www.demog.state.nc.us.

friendship and collegiality in the good news of Jesus Christ. Our ministry really is a gift from God.”¹⁷⁶

A later newsletter featured an analogy between the beautiful medieval cathedral of Cologne, Germany, a Nigerian House of God constructed from stalks of guinea corn rebuilt each year, and the renovation currently progressing in the Wingate Church. In each case, the pastor commented, we must be reminded that

the New Testament teaches that the house of God is not really brick and mortar, wood and fabric, but Spirit indwelling flesh and blood, bone and sinew. As we see the wonderful improvements in our historic church building, perhaps renovation and building needs to occur in our spiritual lives. May we hear the hammer and saw of God’s Spirit in our life as we hear the hammers and saws of the workers around the church.¹⁷⁷

The Church Council Minutes of November, 2001, mentioned for the first time a missions project which would in future years become a very important part of Wingate Baptist giving. Tom Williams recommended that \$2,000 currently budgeted for the Ukrainian Partnership be renamed for 2002 as the “Kiev Children’s Ministry Center” as our contribution to a \$150,000 construction project near Kiev for homeless children. The recommendation was approved. The congregation was struggling somewhat with finances because contributions amounted to only about 80% of the 2001 budget. But staff salaries for pastor and associate pastor were not fully spent during the interim, and the Sanctuary renovation was completed for \$30,000 less than originally anticipated. The 2002 budget recommendation included \$50,000 on debt service and increased to \$450,716.¹⁷⁸

The year 2002 was a time for settling in with Pastor Smith, maintaining momentum in programs from the past and considering new initiatives. The call to service was clear in Jesus’ mandate in the Great Commission that Christians should proclaim the gospel to the world, baptize those who become followers, and teach them to obey Christ’s commandments. The year began with a new gathering for children through fifth grade, called the Seekers. It explored the nature of the faith

¹⁷⁶ “From the Pastor...” *The Chrysalis*, October 17, 2001.

¹⁷⁷ “The Wingate Spirit...” *The Chrysalis*, November 7, 2001.

¹⁷⁸ Church Council Minutes, November, 28, 2001; Church Conference Minutes, December 2, 2001.

for those approaching baptism and who have begun to ask questions about discipleship within the church. In late January, the congregation recognized the lifetime of faithfulness of Ann Williams by bestowing upon her the title "Organist Emerita." Ann's service of more than 40 years as Church Organist has continued after her retirement through her volunteer musical contribution in any number of circumstances, including Wednesday Nights Alive!, weddings, and funerals. The youth continued the "Souper Bowl of Caring" to feed the hungry and a University Student luncheon invited students to worship at Wingate Baptist. The season of Lent began with the baptism of Alex Hinson, Mary Katherine Hinson, Tiffany Ray, Joe Sproule and Owen Sykes.¹⁷⁹ *The Chrysalis* introduced the new CBF of North Carolina program to the congregation: the Children's Ministry Center in Kiev, Ukraine. "Hundreds of children languish on the streets of this impoverished city scavenging for food and fighting to survive." An old building has been purchased to be refurbished as an orphanage by next winter. In Church Council, Bill Mason and Chris Ponds expressed an interest in traveling to the site in Kiev to lend their expertise in engineering and construction. The Baptist Men discussed the possibility of renovation teams doing on-site work.¹⁸⁰ To fund the project and to assist on travel expenses for Bill and Chris, the Baptist Men cooked breakfast for the congregation after the Easter Sunrise service, asking only for donations of pocket change (but folding money was accepted as a substitute). During those spring weeks, the congregation gave \$4,299 for the Kiev project. Interest was clearly growing in this new initiative of Christian ministry.

The Renovation Committee recommended necessary work in the educational building: a new roof, new paint, vinyl floor covering in the Day Care center, replacement of gutters, windows and doors, and other tasks at a cost of \$75,595. The church in conference approved, and the restoration of the physical plant continued.¹⁸¹ Summer Small Groups for 2002 offered a variety of workshops in addition to the usual missions and music activities. Amee Huneycutt offered "Faith and Film," Derrill Smith led a Mid-Week Morning Bible Study, Walter Woodson led *"Merchant of*

¹⁷⁹ *The Chrysalis*, February 13, 2002.

¹⁸⁰ Church Council Minutes, February 24, 2002; *The Chrysalis*, February 27, March 6, 2002.

¹⁸¹ Church Council Minutes, January 27, 2001.

Venice, A Study of Prejudice and Mercy,” and others participated in Wingate Walkers and Beginning Tap Dance for Adults.

After almost a year of reading Derrill’s compositions in *The Chrysalis*, Wingate members appreciated ever more his style and substance. He drew experiences from his reading, his life, unusual events, or people to show characteristics of the faith and Great Commission discipleship. In one

column he produced a word picture of young children watching from the balcony as their friends followed Jesus in baptism—an occasion of obedience fully evidenced in action. In another he reflected on the meaning of home as he contemplated the shift from one place of happiness for thirteen years to a new set of opportunities. Again, the pastor related a simple story of a “random act of kindness” when a neighbor stood at the street awaiting the weekly garbage pick-up on a hot day in order to give



Derrill Smith

the driver and workers a cold Coke—they were thirsty and he gave them drink. To celebrate the completion of renovations, he told of a small church on the rocky coast of England destroyed by a storm. The church was poor and could not rebuild. But the British Navy rebuilt the sanctuary because “That church spire is on all our charts and maps. It is a landmark by which the ships of the seven seas steer their course.” While the Church is not confined to a building, Derrill wrote, there is symbolic importance to the buildings. Whether they are simple or elaborate, “the physical place signals our need for worship, prayer, and fellowship. For nearly two centuries, our church has provided continuous Baptist witness to the people of Union County....” At Thanksgiving, Derrill refreshed the tradition from the first celebration of Thanksgiving Day in 1820 at Plymouth, reenacted at the Bicentennial of the Pilgrim Landing. The original colony had barely survived the “starving time.” Many had died of disease and lack of food. In grateful remembrance in 1820, five grains of

corn were placed at each table setting. Each person at dinner picked up a kernel of corn and shared something for which they are thankful. Let a kernel at your plate, Derrill admonished, "call to memory a blessing from God and let the table become a place of thanksgiving." His messages in *The Chrysalis* were quiet but effective as the congregation explored and reflected on the dimensions of discipleship.¹⁸²

On September 8, the congregation honored emergency personnel in our service in remembrance of 9/11/2001. Members of the Wingate Volunteer Fire Department, Wingate Police, Union County Sheriff's Department, the North Carolina Highway Patrol, American Red Cross, and Emergency Communications Center were present at worship and honored at lunch in the fellowship hall. On Wednesday the 11th, a candlelight service of reflection reminded worshipers of the tragedy one year ago. And in October, the position of Administrative Assistant was again vacant as Karen Nash accepted a position at Wingate Elementary School. The Personnel Committee recommended that Dorothy Wade, who had extensive experience as a church secretary and was a Union County resident, be employed as Administrative Assistant.

The Board of Deacons did not at this time frequently appear in the historical narrative of the congregation as they once did. The Board was as active and demanding of members' time as ever, but now they were fellow servants with the pastor in the spiritual care of the congregation. A summary of the happenings at Board meetings for 2002 will reveal their role in the Wingate congregation. In every meeting, deacons shared names of those with special needs for prayer and pastoral care. Every month seemed to have a different emphasis. In January, the Board welcomed new members, elected officers, and heard Pastor Smith outline three tasks for the year: a training session for deacons on death, ways to build relationship with families, and deacon retreats. In February, they discussed the serving of communion for March and the Easter season. In March, Dr. Smith discussed how deacons could deal with persons experiencing job loss and the accompanying shock, denial, laying blame, fear, isolation, and loneliness. Suggestions for assistance: listen and encourage networking. In June, the deacons discussed anticipated death and grief among their families, with deacons responding on how they have handled these crises in the past. August brought a session on children leaving the family nest for college and the sense of loss by

¹⁸² *The Chrysalis*, February 20, April 19, May 1, June 19, November 20, 2002.

parents. In September they discussed the frequency of communion in the Wingate congregation and the feeling of some that monthly celebration was too often. In October, the Board discussed All Saints' Day; nine members have passed away during the year and will be remembered in the service. Dr. Smith led further discussion on ministering to the bereaved. Wingate was blessed by the faithful service of those elected to be servant-ministers of the congregation.¹⁸³

As usual, the New Year of 2003 began with the installation of eight newly elected deacons to the body of twenty-four men and women. Three of these, Bob Magee, Hal Setser and Joe Sproule, were ordained in a worship service emphasizing the nature of "one who serves" in the early church. These, with Carolyn Braswell, Bill Hargett, Jr., Chuck Taylor, Jennifer Hoerning, and Don Merrill, were installed for their three-year term. The Youth "Souper Bowl" collection again benefited the Union County Community Shelter and Soup Kitchen. That program was begun by the young people of a South Carolina church and has spread nationwide. It has raised over \$10 million to help feed the needy. Our Youth also accepted loans of \$20 to use as seed money for fund raising projects, netting hundreds of dollars to benefit Juvenile Diabetes and the St. Jude Hospital.¹⁸⁴

The Personnel Committee scheduled sessions of conversation with the congregation aimed at establishing the criteria for the position of Associate Pastor. The church was asked to project the areas of our need, to focus on the changing character of the community, and to sharpen the areas of responsibility that this position should include. In February, the congregation mourned with the nation the disaster of the space shuttle Columbia, with the loss of seven lives. The hymn "Eternal Father, Strong to Save" called to mind the dangers shouldered by those who explore new horizons, whether on the sea or in the air. The periodic joint youth choir concerts of Wingate and First Baptist, Monroe continued in 2003 with the presentation of "My Father's World" at both churches. And during Lent, we learned that pretzels were developed in the Middle Ages by German bakers as acceptable Lenten snacks, even curved to represent the crossed arms of a Christian in prayer.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ Board of Deacon Minutes for 2002.

¹⁸⁴ *The Chrysalis*, January 15, 2003.

¹⁸⁵ *The Chrysalis*, March 26, 2003.

The congregation continued to give to missions through various means—yard sales, special appeals, Sunday breakfasts for “change,” and Food Boxes for Iraq—but the church gradually fell farther behind on meeting the regular budget. For 2003, the budget was \$469,652 and the only vacant position was that of Associate Pastor. The budgeted missions giving was \$37,000 and debt service was \$50,000. By April, contributions met only 79% of budget needs, with about \$9,000 needed each Sunday. Derrill asked for a concentrated financial effort for Easter. Our celebration of Christ’s resurrection acknowledges the free gift of God’s love, and our response is to love God and one another. But the congregation lives in the modern world and can continue only in those ministries for which funds are available. “Consider how the Lord has blessed you—and your church for that matter—and come with an offering of grateful praise on Easter Sunday.”¹⁸⁶ By June, collections stood at 82% of the budget with the traditionally weak months of the summer beginning.

There were also happier developments. In May, the church selected “The Hymnal for Worship and Celebration” as the new hymnal for use in the worship service, made possible by gifts in memory of Robert Hoerning. James Hall, director of the Sunday School, made the annual Sunday School Appreciation Banquet a happening event. James’ dry wit and humor, matched by creative MCs like Bill Braswell, made the banquet a memorable occasion as well as honoring the teachers who gave their talents and time and classes which excelled in attendance and outreach. The Summer Small Group workshops again offered varied options for adults: “Art in Religion,” by Carole Williams, “The Gospel According to Baseball,” under John Kapelar, “The Gospel in Country and Western Music,” led by Jay Taylor, Walter and Phyllis Woodson leading “A Mission Trip to South Africa,” “Hospitality Evangelism,” led by Bob Magee, and the annual staples, Bible Study with the pastor and the Wingate Walkers. The well-established PASSPORT mission trip of the youth was again the highlight of the summer for participants. In Louisville, Kentucky, the youth worked in several sites—juvenile facilities, food closets, home repair for an elderly indigent woman—and honor camper awards were won by Heather Buttrell, Virginia Eudy, Callie Stegall, Daniel Sykes, Della Cuthbertson, Bethany Ray, and Mollie Sellers. “Our interpretive movement team inspired the entire camp with their

¹⁸⁶ *The Chrysalis*, May 9, June 1, 2003.

heart-rending interpretation of the Good Samaritan, and the Wingate Church volleyball team won the v'ball championship...."¹⁸⁷ More than 5,000 Baptists gathered in Charlotte at the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship annual General Assembly in June and the pastor, the Fletchers, the Larrimores, the Magees and Jennifer Hoerning attended. Of the event, Derrill wrote: "I felt a cohesive bond that indicates that the CBF is far beyond the divorce with the SBC. No longer were we looking backward toward Egypt, but rather the spirited gathering of free and faithful Baptists is now in a new kind of promise and ministry."¹⁸⁸

The pastor went from the assembly of thousands of Baptists to the fellowship of seven CBF travelers to China, meeting there with Chinese Christians in hopes of discovering new partnerships for the gospel. It was a fruitful journey and certainly revealed many personal and community opportunities which might be explored in the future. In August, the Church Council had a lengthy and detailed discussion of the early worship service. It began under Dr. Somerville to attract new members who preferred a more informal mode of worship. But in recent years, attendance declined significantly, and some felt that the service further fragmented the church when people did not see and worship with the entire congregation regularly. Others firmly supported continuation of the early and different worship experience. The council concluded to bring the matter to the church for discussion and resolution.¹⁸⁹

The Personnel Committee recommended that Dane Jordan, University Campus Minister, be called as interim Associate Pastor. He would administer the Wednesday Nights Alive! and assist in "developing and maintaining vital age-group ministries within the church for senior adults, families, singles, students, youth, and children. For the latter, there was a feeling that we need to do more with children's ministries in an attempt to serve and to reach out to young families."¹⁹⁰ In late October thirty Good Timers continued the tradition of viewing the colors of autumn, this time from the summit of Mount Mitchell, highest point in America east of the Mississippi. They traveled on the beautiful Blue Ridge Parkway, the wonderful legacy of the CCC, built mostly during the most severe economic depression in the history of this country.

¹⁸⁷ *The Chrysalis*, June 18, 2003.

¹⁸⁸ *The Chrysalis*, July 2, 2003.

¹⁸⁹ Church Council Minutes, August 31, 2003.

¹⁹⁰ Personnel Committee Recommendation, *The Chrysalis*, October 1, 2003.

The fall months were dedicated to educating the congregation on the financial operation of the church. Some in the Church Council voiced that members seemed not to apprehend the contribution/spending of the church as a commitment of the whole body. The target was again Homecoming Day, when Dewey Hobbs would once more embody the legend that he remains in the life and memory of the Wingate congregation. In *The Chrysalis*, Derrill referenced Dr. Karl Menninger, physician and psychotherapist of the late 20th century, “who maintained throughout his therapeutic career that one’s view and use of money might be a fair barometer of one’s life and health.” And, Derrill continued, the Bible, particularly Jesus, has a good deal to say about money and our view and use of wealth. To this point in 2003, the congregation was giving about 80% of the approved budget and needed about \$30,000 to move us back into financial stability.¹⁹¹ A few days later Derrill wrote:

What an impressive sight to see our church family come forward at the conclusion of Sunday’s worship services with gifts of thanksgiving to God. Young children, adolescents, young couples and families, middle adults, and senior adults came forward as one family to express gratitude and love to God through tithes and offerings. “Thanks be to God!”¹⁹²

The offering for that Homecoming was \$35,736. Two weeks later, the congregation packed 151 Christmas boxes for children around the world to be distributed by the Good Samaritan Purse in Operation Christmas Child. And the Wingate Christmas missions offering was dedicated to buying materials for the renovation of buildings at the Children’s Ministry Center in Kiev, Ukraine. Bill and Marie Mason agreed to host groups of workers from American churches at the site next summer. Some of those workers will be Wingate Baptists. The Christmas offering goal was \$3,000. By December 10, contributions totaled \$3,649, by December 17, \$7,812, by December 31, \$9,542. By this time the Kiev ministry had a most appropriate new name: “The Village of Hope.”¹⁹³

Clearly the Ukrainian project to rescue children captured the interest and imagination of the Wingate church in early 2004. A dozen or more volunteers began to plan for a summer visit to Kiev to work. The

¹⁹¹ “The Wingate Spirit...” *The Chrysalis*, October 22, 2003.

¹⁹² “The Wingate Spirit...” *The Chrysalis*, November 5, 2003.

¹⁹³ Wingate Baptist Church: 2003—A Year in Review,” *The Chrysalis*, December 31, 2003.

Baptist men held another yard sale and laid plans for an April BBQ dinner to benefit the mission. The overwhelming response in the Christmas mission offering led the pastor to examine the factors contributing to its success. In answer to his questions, one member observed that “shared leadership and involvement helped our church to own the project.” Another said: “a very clear focus generated interest and support,” and yet another: “impressive visual aids sparked interest.” But, the pastor observed, there were also liabilities: “our focus on one project excluded support of CBF missionaries and other projects.” And we must not forget the children at our own back door.¹⁹⁴ The Church Council received a report that in the midst of supporting the Village of Hope, contributions for the regular budget were \$7,000 behind by February and \$14,000 by late April. Yet the “Souper Bowl” collection received \$517 to feed the Union County hungry, the congregation assisted in the land purchase for the new Union Baptist Association building, the WMU donated to Hospice of Union County, and the church sent a financial gift to assist Matt and Michelle Norman in their two year, self-financed ministry to international students in Toronto, Canada, another CBF mission initiative.

Sally Williams reported that the Children’s Weekday Ministry was serving 41 children in a safe, Christian environment. She wrote: “Laughter rings out in the halls of our three-star center. And when there are tears, loving arms are here to hold and comfort a child. As the end of our prayer says, bless you, Jesus, for this loving place for our children.”¹⁹⁵

In January, the Baptist men led the congregation in worship, and on a February Sunday, the women provided leadership: at early worship Sherry Kapelar and Sharon Chudalski offered reflections and homilies, as did Darcie Smith and Jennifer Hoerning at 10:30. Elaine Kirkman, the first woman ordained by the Wingate Church to its Diaconate, was the Deacon on Call. Helen Helms reflected on the Christian symbols in the sanctuary and worship, and Edie Perry led the women’s choir in an anthem. It was an appropriate acknowledgement of the faithful role of women in the history of the Christian Church.

In early March, the church welcomed Annette Moser as the new Administrative Assistant, replacing Dorothy Wade who resigned to spend more quality time with family. Annette and her family were long-time members of the congregation. The late spring brought happy news that

¹⁹⁴ “The Wingate Spirit...” *The Chrysalis*, January 14, 2004.

¹⁹⁵ *The Chrysalis*, February 4, 2004.

Paul Baxley had been called as pastor of First Baptist, Henderson. Soon the news broadened to include Jennifer Hoernig. In July the congregation said a bittersweet farewell to Jennifer as she and Paul were united in marriage and began their life together in service to God and his church. We wished them God's blessing. In April, Wingate again demonstrated its love of Bill Eason's BBQ in a large fund-raising turn-out to assist with travel expenses for eighteen church members bound for the Village of Hope. They would give two weeks of hard summer work to reclaim a building to house the abandoned street children of Kiev.

The summer was again filled with Small Group workshops and Vacation Bible School. Gennady and Mina Podgaisky, our Ukrainian missionaries, spoke to the Wednesday gathering in June detailing the work in Kiev. Wingate began a new tradition with First Baptist, Monroe, with a July 4th shared worship service at the University Lake, followed by a picnic lunch and visiting. The service celebrated the American heritage of religious liberty, particularly acknowledging the important contributions of Baptists. The position of Associate Pastor was filled beginning August 1 by Brenda Collins. Brenda completed her ministerial training in the Divinity School of Campbell University. She taught in secondary education and served in children's ministries at First Baptist, Fairmont. She would administer children's programs, the Wednesday Nights Alive, and assist as needed in the pastoral care of the congregation.

The summer's highlight for some occurred in Kiev, Ukraine. Two teams made the journey: the first group included Walter & Phyllis Woodson, Bill & Debbie Hargett, Matt Williams, Jerry Thomas, Trent Thomas, and April Williams. The second was composed of Wallace & Martha Hasty, Harvey & Macie Michael, Brent Moser, Hal Setser, and Julia Woods. Bill and Marie Mason spent six weeks at the site as hosts and site coordinator. They discovered the joy of fellowship with dedicated Christians, and the personal satisfaction of working alongside and bonding with Ukrainians to rescue homeless children of the city. Upon their return, the travelers excitedly shared with the church their joy in the effort but assured all that it was grueling work to renovate "the former Communist youth camp into a home of hope and faith." Nevertheless, many hoped to return to Kiev next summer.

In the fall of 2003, Carol Taylor spearheaded a spiritual growth ministry originated by Marjorie Thompson and named "Companions in Christ." It featured depth reading of scripture, seeking its multiple

meanings for living and encouraging a closer spiritual relationship with God and others. The small group prayed and reflected, kept a journal of Christian experience, and sought to discern God's calling to service. It was "a discovery of spiritual friends who will listen to you and pray for you." A year later Carol led a second phase of the Companions program with the topic "The Way of Blessedness," concentrating on the Beatitudes and seeking to continue the spiritual formation journey.¹⁹⁶ Brenda also began a six-week study with 4th-6th graders on prayer, entitled "Hey, God, Let's Talk!" In October, the Wingate Deacons invited Baptists of the area to an Ordination Council to examine the call and theology of Brenda Collins, and upon a positive report, the Wingate Baptist Church ordained her to the Christian ministry by the laying on of hands and affirming her divine call to service.¹⁹⁷ On October 26, the Union Baptist Association began the celebration of its 150th anniversary with a service in the Wingate Baptist sanctuary, the oldest missionary Baptist church in the county.

When Wingate minds turned to Christmas and the gift of love in the coming of Jesus, the reminders of the season inspired gifts in honor of the Christ. Some helped to catch up the budget for the year, some gave to a homeless child in Kiev, some provided the Wednesday night meal for the Wingate Estates children, but all shared the lighting of candles on the Advent wreath. Those flames represented our most important emotional affirmations, faith, hope, love and peace, culminating in the lighted candle representing the coming of the Christ child.

In the early issues of *The Chrysalis* for 2005, the pastor called for the year to be a time for "a deeper, more intentional journey with the Spirit [of God]." He personally set an example by engaging in a retreat with eleven other pastors of various denominations entitled "Pastor as Spiritual Guide." The weekly sessions continued for seven months at Avila Retreat Center in Raleigh and were described by Derrill as "a time of prayer, study, and silence." He noted that many in the congregation had already begun similar emphases in their lives through the Companions in Christ or participation in the Village of Hope. Derrill announced a "Sunset Group" to meet in the early evenings in February and March to study Henri Nouwen's *Making All Things New*, for those seeking to increase

¹⁹⁶ *The Chrysalis*, August 27, September 3, 17, 2003; September 22, 29, 2004.

¹⁹⁷ "The Wingate Spirit..." *The Chrysalis*, September 29, October 6, 13, 2004.

their awareness of God's presence and calling of disciples to follow him in discipleship.¹⁹⁸ As a part of this emphasis, the pastor entitled his Lenten season sermons "Let's Pray," a series on the Lord's Prayer.

On Brenda Collins' initiative, the congregation created the Children's Ministry Council to "serve as a guiding force in helping to provide cohesiveness and purpose to Wingate Baptist's children's ministries." It was composed of Sunday School teachers, mission leaders, and parents who will work to improve and build upon the good things we are already doing and seek ways to enhance our efforts. February brought the beginning of Lent on Ash Wednesday, the Souper Bowl benefiting Union County's hungry, and the announcement of the 2004 mission offering for the Village of Hope: \$6,518 to provide materials to begin renovation of a second structure for the Kiev children. The church also became a "sister church" with the Bethany Baptist Church, Bucha, Ukraine, located about a half mile from the Village of Hope. Wingate missionaries will worship at Bethany Church during their work weeks in the Village.¹⁹⁹ In April we again ate Little Red Pig pork BBQ and cleaned out closets, attics, basements, and garages for the big Yard Sale of the Baptist Men, with proceeds of both projects assisting with travel expenses for our Village of Hope work teams.

Wednesday Nights Alive! became the focus of attention in the late spring under Brenda's leadership. "Many good and wonderful things go on Wednesday nights at Wingate Baptist, but that doesn't mean that there is not room for improvement." A task force was charged to examine and articulate the audience we are trying to reach and what we are trying to accomplish with them. Has some of the enthusiasm of past years waned? Do we need revision or revival?²⁰⁰ Wednesday Night Alive! returned with new vigor in September. Lex Youngman from the University set up a potter's wheel and demonstrated the parable of the potter from Jeremiah. Then the congregation joined in a "Family Front Porch Gathering" to discuss informally issues of church life. Bob Billinger presented his research on German POWs in the US during World War II, with special attention to Camp Sutton in Monroe. In October and November, the pastor coordinated a seminar on "Preparing for the

¹⁹⁸ "The Wingate Spirit..." *The Chrysalis*, January 12, 19, 2005.

¹⁹⁹ Church Council Minutes, February 27, 2005, Church Conference Minutes, April 10, 2005.

²⁰⁰ *The Chrysalis*, March 30, 2005.

Future: End of Life Issues,” led by church staff and other professionals in the field. Presentations dealt with the grief process, helping children with grief, respecting last wishes, final arrangements, estate planning, and passing along family heritage to the next generation.

In the summer Bill and Marie Mason again hosted workers at the Village of Hope. Wingate Baptist was represented by Bob & Cheryl Billinger, Bill & Debbie Hargett, Harvey and Macie Michael, Dale & Laraine Dupree, Mike Chudalski, Martha Hasty, Drew Mayton, and Lyndia Tart. They returned with enriched lives and stories to tell.

Trust David Sherwood and the Youth to find new ways to fund PASSPORT, this summer in far-away Toronto, Canada. The usual Spaghetti Lunch fund-raiser was again well attended. Then during the week several church members returned home from work to find that a flock of PINK FLAMINGOS occupied their front yards—dozens and dozens of them! Upon inquiry members discovered that the Youth would clear their flocked yards for a donation--\$50 was suggested and appreciated. And for another \$25 one could encourage the birds to move to a neighbor’s yard. One could even buy “flamingo insurance” for \$50 which applied a special concoction guaranteed to ward off the birds—all, of course, for a wonderful cause. Send those kids to Canada—quickly! When the PASSPORT youth returned and shared with the congregation the evidences of their spiritual growth, everyone smiled at the memory of pink birds and silently thanked God for the creative imagination of youth. Elizabeth Maye shared her conviction of God’s calling her into vocational Christian ministry, bringing about more prayers of encouragement. Thanks be to God for the children and youth ministry of Wingate Church and for families whose example of commitment is a source of inspiration for the next generation.

More tragedy struck Americans as Hurricanes Katrina and Rita swept along the Gulf Coast in September, destroying small coastal towns and flooding New Orleans. The CBF disaster relief solicited funds and workers to help families whose homes were badly damaged or destroyed. Wingate contributed \$3,800 immediately, and disaster teams began to form under the leadership of Jerry Thomas. Closer to home, area churches planned two new Habitat homes for South Main Street in Wingate creating many tasks for volunteers in the construction. Carol Taylor united local knitters in a “Prayer Shawl” outreach in which lovely knitted wraps were crafted for people experiencing difficulties even as

the knitter prayed for them. Shawls went to Hospice, nursing homes, new mothers, and missionaries.

The fall also brought new developments of impending change in Baptist denominational ideas. The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina nominating committee placed Wingate on a “black” list, refusing to nominate any of its members to places in convention service. The rationale for the decision included Wingate’s decision to separate from the SBC and affiliate with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. The state convention continued to accept our contributions without protest. It appeared to Wingate Baptist that fundamentalist leadership would soon take over the state body as it had the national. The church activated its Affiliations Committee “to assess our role and involvement in the Baptist family at large.”²⁰¹

Through the years the deaths of stalwart pillars of the Wingate congregation had brought tears of grief but prayers of thanksgiving for the contributions of those who have walked among us. In recent years on All Saints’ Day, the church remembered gratefully and called the name of each departed member in prayer. In 2005, the day’s worship began with the *Apostles Creed* including the line “I believe in the communion of the saints...” and ended with celebrating the sacrament of The Lord’s Supper. This year, Carolyn Caldwell Gaddy was on the list, author of the history of the congregation, *Saturday Before the Second Sabath*, published in 1985 and forming the foundation for the present narrative to carry the history to the Bicentennial. The list was long for 2005 and the impact on the church was profound: Rosalie Boone, Harold Carter, Jane Cox, Carolyn Gaddy, Bill Hargett, Sr., Don Haskins, Bette Lowery, Anne McConnell, and Bessie Smith.²⁰² As with all of our departed fellow Christians of all years, we feel weakened by their leaving, but stronger for their having shared the good yoke of Christ with us.

On November 13, Wingate Baptist honored Tom Lowery for his faithful service to the music ministry “as leader of congregational singing, singer and spokesman for the men’s quartet, patriarch of a musical family, and stalwart member of the choir,” appointing him ‘Honorary Song Leader.’ He is always associated with revivals, special occasions, and the favorite hymn singing when he could evoke a thundering chorus or a simple melody from this congregation.

²⁰¹ “The Wingate Spirit...” *The Chrysalis*, September 21, 2005.

²⁰² “The Wingate Spirit...” *The Chrysalis*, November 2, 2005.

The year closed with all the important dimensions of Christmas: lighting the Advent wreath each Sunday of the season, the hanging of the green, over a hundred boxes collected for Operation Christmas Child, the Christmas Cantata, a Church-Wide Christmas Carol Sing, and a Candlelight Communion on Christmas Eve. But the eyes of the congregation were turned outward in a dozen different directions: some marveled at the progress of the Village of Hope, but knew more was needed; others labored with Jerry Taylor on the South Main Habitat House; Jerry Thomas and a brave disaster team prepared to face the Katrina/Rita wreckage in Bayou La Batre, Alabama; yet others had discovered critical needs for volunteers at Wingate Elementary School and filled the void. Derrill gave order and purpose to this multi-faceted response of Christ-followers confronted with a hurting world:

Rather than depending on a few church leaders to staff one or two projects, this approach trusts our entire fellowship to find our unique calling. Not all projects will garner financial or physical support from the congregation, but we can encourage one another as we learn about the unique ways that others are sharing the good news of God's love. Perhaps my most important role as your Pastor is to awaken you to God's call for your life and then lead the cheering as you venture into that calling.²⁰³

For some members of the congregation, the new calendar year began in a bustle. The Katrina Disaster Team, composed of Brent Moser, Chris Ponds, Dale Dupree, Martha Hasty, Stephanie Miller, Sherry Kapelar, Harvey & Macie Michael, April Williams, Tom Crooke, and Jerry Thomas traveled to Alabama where they labored for a week in the still remaining devastation of the hurricane. The Baptist Men continued their faithful service to the Village of Hope. In 2005, under leadership from Bob Magee, the men packed and shipped containers to Kiev filled with 100 bed sets donated by Wingate University. Now, again, thanks to the connections of Mitch Eudy, a donation of playground equipment was received from Richard Petty of Randleman. Baptist men hauled several truck loads to Wingate and again packed containers with items to bring joy to the children of Kiev, showing them again the love of God through the actions of his disciples.²⁰⁴ Volunteers at Wingate Elementary

²⁰³ "The Wingate Spirit..." *The Chrysalis*, December 7, 2005.

²⁰⁴ "The Chrysalis, May 18, 2005, February 1, 2006; Church Council Minutes, January 22, 2006.

supervised lunch on Wednesday to give the teachers a student-free lunch period. They tutored reading skills and helped in the Afterschool Program. At the church, Brenda brought the weekday children into the sanctuary to sing, talk about God's love, and to learn about praying.

In late March, Derrill raised a question on the unity of vision within the Church. Our most significant question, he said, is "Who and what is the Spirit of God calling Wingate Baptist Church to be and do in this 21st century?...Although our congregation does not have consensus on our primary vision, many of you are working out the Spirit's call in your own lives. What would it take for our congregation to come together with a single vision?"²⁰⁵ The pastor was aware of how easily a congregation may lose sight of a mission initiative. For example, in the Church Council, questions were asked about the Lampungese of Indonesia, an unreached people adopted by the congregation a few years ago. Steve and Elizabeth Johnson were forced for health reasons to give up their work. The Missions/Evangelism Committee promised to inquire on whether other CBF personnel had continued the work. Questions also surfaced on the vitality of the Wingate Estates ministry (formerly Trailer Park Ministry). The number of participating children seemed to some to have diminished. Brenda detailed the current status: the community is somewhat transient and the numbers vary periodically. Children are still coming to our Wednesday service and enjoy it while others have begun to attend other churches. Our greatest gift in this ministry is to create a church place where these children feel that they are accepted.²⁰⁶

As a part of the national "Week of the Young Child" in early April, the children in our weekday ministry put together flower gardens with a variety of plants. Children brought plants, some even trays of plants, and seven gardens were planted around the Church. The gardens were dedicated to Edie Perry who has over the years freely given of her time and talent to the congregation and its many ministries. The spring was rounded out with attention to the summer missionaries traveling again to Kiev. Bill and Marie Mason were again official hosts and project coordinators at the Village of Hope. Wingate Baptist sold nearly 2,000 plates of Bill Eason's BBQ and rummaged through closets and garages for yard sale items, with proceeds of both events assisting with travel expenses for those who could go. Using William Carey's famous line,

²⁰⁵ "The Wingate Spirit..." *The Chrysalis*, March 29, 2006.

²⁰⁶ Church Council Minutes, January 22, February 26, 2006.

Pastor Smith encouraged people to “hold the rope for those who would descend into the well.” Both roles were fulfilled with Christian enthusiasm. Dale & Laraine Dupree, Harvey & Macie Michael, Bill Hargett and Lyndia Tart signed up to join the Masons in June.²⁰⁷

By April the flamingos returned to Wingate, and happy youth cleared up the mess as the birds moved from yard to yard and earned money for their PASSPORT TRIP in mid-summer, this year to New Orleans to assist in the continuing recovery from Hurricane Katrina. The Fourth of July celebration with First Baptist, Monroe at the University Lake had now become a regular and happy tradition of worship, good food and conversation, and recreation for those with lots of energy. And Wingate folks were always invited to the Chudalski’s cookout on actual Independence Day. Work continued on the packing of playground equipment for the Ukraine mission. In August, Jerry Thomas led a second team to Bayou La Batre, assisting people to get back into their homes. The team included Tom & Frances Crooke, Derrill & Cindy Smith, Harvey & Macie Michael, Jerry & Ann Thomas, John Fulgham, Martha Hasty, and Stephanie Miller. They ministered in the name of the Wingate congregation, their very actions a testimony to the love of Christ.²⁰⁸

On July 9, Tom Crooke, Chair of the Properties Committee, reported to the congregation that Wingate University is interested in dialogue with the Church relative to our property and physical plant and a possible purchase and/or exchange. “A tangible offer has not yet been made,” Tom continued, “but the congregation will be informed about any offer, and because our church is congregational in nature, the congregation will make the final decision.” Derrill pointed out that two issues were involved: one would be a real estate decision, and the other would be the need to clarify our vision of mission for the coming decades. The issues are interconnected: the physical plant must serve the mission, and the vision of mission energizes the effort required to renovate or relocate. The Pastor, the Church Council, and the Board of Deacons favored a congregational engagement in dialogue on vision, facilitated by a consultant from the Center for Congregational Health located in Winston-Salem.²⁰⁹ The Church heard a presentation from Chris Gambill, senior consultant with the Center in September. Derrill prepared the

²⁰⁷ “The Wingate Spirit...” *The Chrysalis*, April 25, 2006.

²⁰⁸ “The Wingate Spirit...” *The Chrysalis*, June 9, 20, July 5, 2006.

²⁰⁹ “The Wingate Spirit...” *The Chrysalis*, July 25, 2006.

congregation with a *Chrysalis* dedicated to the meeting. He reassured everyone that

There is no real offer on the table yet, and we are not sure if the leadership of either institution will get to that point. However, the electricity of a possible real estate decision is fueling attention to a bigger issue which will be the matter of consideration at our "Town Meeting" on September 24. In a nutshell that bigger decision might be framed this way: "Who are we? Where are we headed? What will Wingate Baptist Church be in ten, fifteen, or twenty years?"

Before we can decide about real estate or any kind of major building program we need to pause and reflect on our calling as a congregation of Christ's followers in a community and world that has drastically changed over the years....We have the responsibility to survey our congregation's third century in light of the Spirit's leadership and call. A complex task.²¹⁰

While Chris Gambill developed the Center's proposal for Wingate, church life moved in familiar rhythms. The RAs, GAs and Mission Friends made fleece blankets to send to children in the Village of Hope. Church members were asked to "Adopt-A-Student" to strengthen the ministry to the University. "Gently loved" stuffed animals were solicited for transport to Kiev. Wednesday evenings focused on the theme "It's Time: A Journey Towards Missional Faithfulness." The Christian Life/Families Ministry Committee developed new ideas to encourage the congregation to play together—young and old—such as "Trunk or Treat" on October 29 when families decorated auto trunks for a Halloween Carnival, gathered at the church, and played, enjoyed each other, ate hotdogs, and gave treats to the children. Later, Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes were prepared for distribution. The Church celebrated with Sally Williams and her staff the award of a 4-star state rating for our Weekday Children's facility and program. And a Pizza Exam Break was provided for stressed University students.

Late in the fall, the congregation received a proposal from the Center. It defined general tasks as: clarifying Wingate's unique identity, identifying core values, locating arenas of mission and ministry to which the Church feels called, and projecting the type of facilities needed to fulfill the future mission and ministry. The proposal recommended the selection of a leadership team which would involve the congregation in self analysis, goal projection, and the development of a working plan.

²¹⁰ "The Wingate Spirit..." *The Chrysalis*, September 12, 2006.

The proposal was thoroughly reviewed by the Church Council and recommended to the Church for approval.²¹¹

As expected, the Church Conference in December was a lively and lengthy one. While some felt that another detailed examination of mission and call was unnecessary at this time, a consensus emerged that favored the proposal. The possibility of relocation of the church plant generated much discussion with vocal opinions on both sides of the issue. Everyone knew that the church building had moved on three occasions in history, from the location north of Wingate on Camden Road to the site near the railroad and the east-west wagon road, and finally in 1922 to the present location. Not surprisingly, some expressed strong attachment to the current building. In the end, the congregation deferred action until January.²¹²

The delay was partially caused by another thorny issue on the conference agenda. At the same meeting, the congregation heard a report from the Affiliations Committee recommending that the Church cease to support the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina “due to [its] current philosophy and direction...” and that mission funds be re-directed to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina Missions Resource Plan. Tom Crooke reviewed the rationale in some detail after which members freely questioned and stated opinions on both sides of the issue. The primary concern was Wingate Baptist’s perceptions of denominational infringement of the autonomy of the local congregation. After the discussion the Church decided to vote on this issue by written ballot; the tally showed 114 votes for the recommendation and 14 against.²¹³ As a result, the Wingate Baptist Church hereafter partnered and financially supported the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship at the national/international level, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina, and the Union Baptist Association. Pastor Smith summarized the impact of this vote:

What does this mean for our church, especially in light of my suspicion that WBC is the only Baptist congregation in Union County that chooses this stand? For me it means that we affirm traditional Baptist convictions that each

²¹¹“Center for Congregational Health, Proposal to Wingate Baptist Church,” Insert, *The Chrysalis*, November 15, 2006.

²¹² Church Conference Minutes, December 3, 2006.

²¹³ Church Conference Minutes, December 3, 2006; Church Council Minutes, December 3, 2006.

congregation is autonomous and responsible to God. It means that contrary to current “mob think” among Southern Baptists, WBC chooses to offer open hearts and hands to all of God’s children. It means that we believe that God’s Spirit gives gifts of ministry and leadership to both genders. It means that just as we value a “free pulpit” to preach the gospel of Christ, a “free and educated pew” is essential to a congregation that affirms the priesthood of every believer and the autonomy of every soul.²¹⁴

On January 14, the congregation in conference again considered the proposal from the Center for Congregational Health. Because the matter had been discussed on two other occasions, no further questions were raised. The congregation approved the recommendation of the Church Council. In the next *Chrysalis*, the Pastor outlined the important tasks immediately ahead. First a Leadership Team representing the diversity of the membership—young and old, male and female in various stages of life, town and gown, those with deep roots in the congregation and newcomers—should be elected using our established procedure to elect deacons. The elected team would engage in training under Chris Gambill. The congregation would then be involved in a variety of tasks and discussions moving the process to a conclusion during calendar 2007.

To promote better communication, the January 30 *Chrysalis* featured a full page summary of the minutes of the Church Council containing the reports from various leaders of the church and committee chairs. It seemed an effective way to inform the people of events, program evaluation, and plans for the future. For example, the pastor discussed a proposed “New/Prospective Members” class and plans for a Lenten season study titled “Children of Abraham.” Bill Mason announced that the congregation had met 98% of its budget for 2006, now newly named the “Annual Ministry Plan (AMP).” Bill Hargett discussed various happenings in several mission initiatives—a fundraising breakfast for the Village of Hope, the Global Mission Offering, the new Habitat house in Marshville, and church grounds workdays for the Spring. Sally Williams shared information on the Weekday Children’s Ministry, Emily Lowery mentioned the need for persons to fill up the flower calendar for the Sanctuary, and Tom Crooke detailed the effort of the Properties Committee to secure an appraisal of the church property.²¹⁵ Suzy Setser announced a Christian Life/Family Ministry plan for a special Wednesday

²¹⁴ “The Wingate Spirit...” *The Chrysalis*, November 21, 2006.

²¹⁵ “Wingate Baptist Church Council Update,” *The Chrysalis*, January 30, 2007.

night event on February 21—a quick hotdog dinner and trip to the campus for Johnny Jacumin’s final game coaching the University Women’s Basketball Team. In recommending that occasion to the congregation, Pastor Smith commented: “Coach Jacumin has used the coaching venue to do more than compiling one of the most impressive records in women’s basketball. He has encouraged student athletes, along with their families and fans, to play the game of life with tenacity and fairness.”²¹⁶

The February Church Council meeting was equally informative for the congregation. Reports detailed the deacon’s discussion of grief ministry, the Cassette/Visitation committee’s work with shut-in members, a report of a successful Village of Hope breakfast which raised almost \$1,900, and more about the Habitat house. Derrill announced that the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina has requested Wingate Church to host its regional meeting in our Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall in May. The gathering will inform local churches how the Fellowship is enabling Baptists “to hammer out effective, loving ways to minister in a broken world.”²¹⁷ The congregation will be invited to participate.

For 2007, *The Chrysalis* also incorporated a new graphic representation of the congregation’s gifts to the Annual Ministry Plan. In the past, only numbers were reported, but the new format included a clear visual graph of needs and receipts for the current month and year to date. No commentary was necessary, and only a glance was needed to understand clearly the financial status of the church.

The March Church Council summary came as a newsletter insert. Among the reports, Joe Larrimore announced that the new Union Baptist Association Missions Resource Center was nearing completion. Elaine Kirkman indicated that the Prayer Shawl Ministry had added six new members. Bill Hargett’s Missions Committee announced a \$4,000 Global Missions Offering goal for the Spring would be used for building materials at the Village of Hope. The Council asked that Missions and Evangelism consult together with the Women’s Missionary Union on the missions offering goals and plans in future years.

The Easter season was marked by a Choir Cantata and a Seder Meal on Wednesday led by Robin Landsman commemorating the

²¹⁶ “The Wingate Spirit...” *The Chrysalis*, February 13, 2007.

²¹⁷ “The Wingate Spirit...” *The Chrysalis*, May 4, 2007.

deliverance of the Hebrews from Egypt. This association with Passover remembrance gave the congregation an historical context within which to reflect once again upon the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus.

For the Leadership Team, the congregation selected Kay Jo Baucom, Carolyn Braswell, Mike Chudalski, Bill Hargett, Jerry Kirkman, Linda Mangum, Mike Mangum, Elizabeth Maye, Jarrod McCraw, Don Merrill, Harvey Michael, Chris Ponds, Clay Setser, Suzy Setser, and Jerry Thomas. They named Mike Mangum as chairman, met for training with Chris Gambill, and scheduled twice-monthly Sunday morning planning meetings. The team pledged to cultivate a "consensus as to who we are and what we are called to do. This mission can only be accomplished with the prayers, love, support and assistance of everyone affiliated with our Church."²¹⁸ The team alerted the congregation of upcoming reflections on the history of the Wingate Church in June as well as a need for surveys to determine congregational priorities and planned opportunities for conversation.

Among the reports to the Church Council in its April meeting was news that the University Student Ministry was responding under the leadership of the Chudalskis, with a regular Sunday School class, Wednesday Bible study, and a beach retreat. Pastor Smith shared that Chris Ponds was considering means for revitalizing the Baptist Men's organization.²¹⁹ The month of May included a rush of activity before the slower days of summer: the spring BBQ served almost 1400 plates and raised money for the Village of Hope. The Prayer Shawl Ministry received gifts and yarn-shop discounts which doubled their output, giving "Hugs from God" to many troubled persons. Wingate men led by Jerry Wallace assisted in raising two Habitat houses in Marshville. The Youth fed spaghetti to the congregation and published rumors that flocks of flamingos were nearing Wingate in support of the PASSPORT, 2007, to be held in Boston for summer youth missions, study, and fun.

As the summer bloomed Wingate minds turned again to Kiev. Harvey & Macie Michael served as hosts for six weeks and Bill Mason as project supervisor. Stephen Bishop, Dale & Laraine Dupree, Chris Garlow, Bill Hargett, Adam Helms, Stephanie Miller, Jerry Thomas, and April Williams traveled again to work on the Village of Hope. *The Chrysalis* published Harvey's final journal entry:

²¹⁸ *The Chrysalis*, May 1, 2007.

²¹⁹ Summary of Church Council, April 22, 2007, insert in *The Chrysalis*, April 24, 2007.

Like a sailboat tacking constantly as the wind changed, but keeping a steady heading, I tried to be a positive factor in a dynamic situation that could without a moment's notice pile up on the rocks of discord or shudder to a stop on hidden shoals. My prayer is that when the account is tallied, it will be determined that we did more to help than to hinder....

I will cherish the memory...of Tonya running tiptoe after the other children, all ears and thin hair, or...Sasha, Mischa, Tata---all of them: children playing, happy...no longer discarded.

They seem so few. But one would be enough to justify the work, the planning, the spending. I cannot look at what we have done and will continue to do as an accountant's balance sheet. It just doesn't work that way.

I doubt if I will live long enough to see this project completed; maybe it will never be completed in the sense of "It's done—we are finished," but I do not regret one moment of time spent here. I have ached in my body, felt my strength drained so that I moved only by sheer will, but I thank God that I have been a part of his work here in The Village of Hope.²²⁰

On Historical Reflection Sunday in June, members of the congregation reminisced, shared old pictures, and heard stories serious and humorous about the "ancients" and the "moderns" of Wingate Baptist. The Leadership Team surveyed the congregation on three questions to define why this church is important: "What first attracted you to this church? What is something about this congregation that you would not want to change or lose as the congregation plans for and moves toward the future? What is something that this congregation does better than other churches?" Responses to the three questions were tallied and shared with the congregation in a newsletter insert. On the first question, 42% of the respondents were attracted to the Wingate Church by friends, neighbors, and colleagues. About 24% were born or grew up in this congregation, and 22% were attracted to the church because of its location near the University or home. On the second question, 44% of respondents valued the warm, caring, sharing, and friendly fellowship of the church, 14% wished to safeguard the respect for local congregational autonomy, and 14% wanted to keep the acceptance and openness for congregational diversity. The third question asked what we do better than other churches: 32% affirmed Wingate's strong sense of care and support for its members.²²¹

As the summer heat cooled and the leaves turned to red and gold, Wingate mission teams were on the road again. The Katrina Relief team

²²⁰ "The Wingate Spirit..." *The Chrysalis*, July 31, 2007.

²²¹ *The Chrysalis*, insert, September 11, 2007.

returned to Bayou La Batre to help reconstruct homes. Another team traveled to Henderson, NC, partnering with sister CBFNC churches to assist those living in dire circumstances. The various teams constructed, cleaned, repaired, landscaped, and fed the hungry. The Good Timers visited the new Billy Graham Library for a tour and lunch. The Youth joined with Children's Ministries to present the annual Fall Festival for children on October 28. The Prayer Shawl Ministry received letters of gratitude from a King's Mountain man recovering from knee replacement surgery, another from a Chapel Hill mother of a student temporarily paralyzed in a fall, and another from a 95-year old grandmother in Edenton diagnosed with aggressive cancer. Elaine Kirkman wrote: "These are just three folks who have received shawls in the last three weeks. We are grateful to each of you [Wingate members] for your prayers on their behalf, for your gifts which have made the purchase of yarn possible and for your giving spirit which makes a ministry like this so far-reaching."²²²

Children from Wingate Estates continued to come to the Wednesday evening dinner and missions activities. Brenda appealed for more volunteers for transporting the youngsters to the church and persons who would assist with Missions Friends:

We need individuals who will sit with a child at dinner and ask them about their day—people who are willing to invest in the lives of children, finding out their struggles, their fears and their joys. People who will patiently listen to the story about what happened at recess yesterday. Individuals are needed who will help with the boys and girls as they learn about God....But let me give you a caution—the job is not easy...[but] the rewards are truly out of this world. You will get more hugs than you ever thought possible. You will see children waiting for the familiar church van, so full of excitement that they cannot stand still. You will get to see the wonder in the eyes of a child—and the pride they have as they sing....You will see the face of Christ in the child who eagerly gives you a picture they just colored, or who just wants to hold your hand as you walk along the sidewalk.²²³

With Advent came the many opportunities for the Christmas season. Operation Christmas Child brought in shoeboxes filled for children in all parts of the world. Forest Hills High School drama department produced Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* featuring Harper McCraw as Tiny Tim and Christine Buttrell as Miranda Cratchit.

²²² *The Chrysalis*, October 9, 2007.

²²³ *The Chrysalis*, November 13, 2007.

"Toys for Tots" gathered donations for Union County children and "Singing Christmas Carols" were offered by the Wingate Youth. Chris Ponds and lots of volunteers directed a Christmas pageant featuring children of the Wingate congregation entitled "Tell the Good News." Amid bathrobes, sandals, and angels wings, the church was again connected to the nativity and its meaning—and to Christmas pageants in years long gone when many Wingate members themselves sang of mangers and shepherds and wise men. The adults celebrated a Moravian Love Feast and gave to the Global Missions Offering supporting CBF Missions field personnel around the world. Again on Christmas Eve, families gathered to celebrate the Sacrament of Communion, in remembrance of the Gift of God.

With New Year 2008 came a realization that the Bicentennial of the Meadow Branch/Wingate Baptist Church was just around the corner. The congregation established itself as a Baptist Church on "Saturday before the Second Sabith:" January 13, 1810, so January 10, 2009 will be the equivalent Saturday and therefore will mark the 199th birthday and January 9, 2010 the 200th. Tentative plans had been discussed casually for some time, but now it was crunch time! Various ideas were floating around—the updating of Carolyn Gaddy's history from 1984 to the present; a Bicentennial Cookbook to preserve the famous Wingate recipes which grace our Fellowship Hall tables; several dramatic presentations of landmark events in Wingate life; and a series of gathering times when members and friends living elsewhere could return to Wingate. The wheels began to turn.

In the meantime, the events of Wingate Baptist proceeded as the congregation continued to live the Great Commission. New deacons were installed and Carole Williams, Ron Croft, and Peggy Taylor were ordained to that servant ministry. The Baptist Men prepared for Men's Day, featuring Sonny Ziegler's testimonial challenge based on the intersection of his faith and vocation as a university athletic coach. Reflections were given by Griggs McCorkle and Greg Bell, with gospel music selections led by James Hall. Derrill initiated a Wednesday evening Lenten study of the book of Job entitled "Into the Fire, out of the Ashes," with the season beginning on Ash Wednesday Worship at noon on February 6.

The Pastor announced to the congregation a new national gathering of Baptists in Atlanta, headed by Jimmy Carter and others, called the "New Baptist Covenant." It was not a new denomination but

an agency to “encourage awareness and cooperation among diverse Baptists...on pressing human issues.” Representatives of more than thirty national Baptist conventions attended, including Derrill and Brenda from Wingate Baptist. The Church Council received a happy report that the 2007 Annual Ministry Plan of \$421,000 was fully subscribed, with an additional \$34,000 contributed to various mission projects. By retiring the debt on the vans, the congregation was fully debt-free. The Council discussed and supported a request to use our facilities on Saturday evenings by a new local Alcoholics Anonymous group. The recommendation was approved in Church Conference.²²⁴ The WMU collected gently used children’s books for Wingate Elementary children in a project named “Christine’s Gift” honoring Christine Buttrell’s initiation of this worthy idea last year. The Good Timers revived memories in visiting the Norman Rockwell exhibit at Discovery Place in Charlotte.

In February, the Leadership Team presented a draft of Core Values of the congregation for discussion and suggestions. The document was designed to “introduce visitors to Wingate Baptist Church and to be a touchstone for our membership, reminding us of our unique identity.”

Recognizing God as our creator, we seek to honor God with our lives, seeking first His kingdom and His righteousness.

Affirming the Bible as God’s word, we seek to apply all knowledge to grow in grace and in wisdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Living out the compassion of Christ, we seek to build community and to nurture relationships with each other and with our neighbors.

Embracing all who follow Christ as Lord, we seek to emphasize historic Baptist freedoms* in our support of individuals living out God’s will for their lives.

Accepting the Great Commission, we seek to minister through local and global missions sharing the gospel of Christ as we go.

Knowing that all need to encounter God, we seek to worship together as a community of faith.

***Historic Baptist Freedoms**

Bible Freedom-the right of the individual believer to interpret Scriptures for himself or herself

Soul Freedom-the right of the individual believer to be convicted by the Holy Spirit free of creeds established by others

Church Freedom-the right of each church, under the Lordship of Christ, to ordain its own ministers and to decide its own structure, order of worship, and membership requirements

²²⁴ Church Council Minutes, January 27, February 24, 2008.

Religious Freedom—the right of individual Christians to worship without the dictates or intervention of the state or state-sanctioned religion²²⁵

In April, as the church completed its Spring mission offering, Bill Mason, now a member of the international Board of Directors for the Village of Hope, presented a report on the project. The facility in the Ukrainian town of Bucha, he said, supports thirty homeless children:

We have completed 4 significant projects: the Lighthouse which houses 2 families of ten children each, the security fence and guard house to protect the grounds and families, and a cottage that will house another family of ten children...Construction has begun on the second family cottage scheduled for completion in the summer of 2009.²²⁶

The 2008 missionaries to the Village of Hope, some veterans, some rookies, were commissioned by the congregation to join hosts Bill & Marie Mason: Heather Buttrell, Dale & Laraine Dupree, Chris Garlow, Bill Hargett, Adam Helms, and Stephanie Miller. Stephanie later wrote from Bucha:

Bricks and mortar took up the majority of our time at the VOH; however, the real reason we all went half way around the world to take down then build walls greeted us with smiling faces and a twinkle in their eyes as we entered the Village after lunch each day. They came running into our arms full of excitement, wanting to play and soak every bit of love we were willing to give. These children, each of whom has experienced things worse than many of us can imagine, now have families who care about them and a safe, happy place to live.²²⁷

The Wingate Youth, under the leadership of David Sherwood, added another worthy project to their already overflowing plate—"Watering Malawi," a campaign to provide healthy drinking water to the people of Malawi, for which they collected \$725 by July. One wonders how many churches inspire and are inspired by the young people in their midst; indeed, our cup overflows with God's empowerment. Adults continued to participate in the October CBFNC mission initiative in targeted North Carolina counties. Missioners painted, renovated small

²²⁵ *The Chrysalis*, insert by the Leadership Team, February 19, 2008.

²²⁶ *The Chrysalis*, April 22, 2008.

²²⁷ "Pieces of the Puzzle," *The Chrysalis*, July 8, 2008.

projects, cleaned yards, managed children's carnivals, and fed the hungry.

Ginger Tucker requested ordination to the Christian gospel ministry by the Wingate Church. Ginger served as a lay minister heading Wingate's initiative at the Trailer Park in the 1990s and has since worked with the Union Baptist Association and the Mill Creek Church. She is presently assistant to the pastor at the Marshville Presbyterian Church. The congregation voted to proceed through the examination steps leading to a September service of ordination.²²⁸

During the fall months, the congregation continued its usual activities: a report on the Village of Hope detailed both successes and continuing needs, the Good Timers traveled to Asheville for the colors, the children's Fall Festival celebrated Halloween with games and fun for all ages, and plans were laid for Operation Christmas Child boxes and the Christmas Pageant. But everyone was aware of the progress of the Leadership Team and conclusion of a two-year study of the mission and ministry of the church. A gathering was announced for October 26 to discuss the report.

Throughout the visioning process, you [the congregation] have provided the helpful, healthful "noise" of conversation, questions and discussion. Some voices whispered; others pitched tones to be heard....We are asking that you lift your voices once more. Please study the report and consider the recommendations....[on October 26] ask questions, discuss the recommendations and begin to formulate how you fit in the proposals....We all want this report to precipitate an explosion of energy and enthusiasm for Wingate Baptist Church. We want our "noise" of opinion and attitudes to turn in actions.²²⁹

On November 2, the church met in conference to vote on fourteen recommendations of the Leadership Team and to determine our direction regarding the possible sale of the property to the University and relocation of our physical plant. Several procedural questions arose, particularly regarding the votes of those unable to attend this conference. The vote was postponed for two weeks and provisions made for absentee voting.

²²⁸ "The Wingate Spirit..." *The Chrysalis*, July 8, 2008; Church Conference Minutes, August 3, 2008.

²²⁹ "Leadership Team News," *The Chrysalis*, October 21, 2008.

On the designated day, the congregation approved by written ballot all of the recommendations of the Leadership Team by margins ranging from 81% to 100%.²³⁰ In summary, the recommendations established: (1) that the church conduct an annual covenant emphasis and renewal; (2) that the Missions and Evangelism Committee evaluate current mission endeavors and identify new missions opportunities; (3) that the Christian Life/Family Ministries Committee identify other forms of ministry for individuals, small groups, and the congregation; (4) that the University Ministries Committee and the Christian Life/Family Ministries Committee identify additional opportunities to minister to the students, faculty, and staff of Wingate University; (5) that the Daycare Committee participate in future discussions about facility needs to enable the continued operation of this ministry; (6) that the Senior Pastor, Associate Pastor, and the Music Minister work with the Music Committee to explore the inclusion of more elements of contemporary worship while retaining our worship style; (7) that the Church Council re-organize into a smaller group responsible for the management and supervision of the life of the church subject to the approval of the congregation; (8) that the Youth Minister and the Youth Ministries Committee study the needs of the youth and recommend changes, including possible assistance by university students, increasing the budget, and exploring the facilities question with the Properties Committee; (9) that the Public Relations Committee develop procedures to notify members of current news and to promote church events to the larger community; (10) that the staff and all committees utilize data from the Ministry Priority Worksheet and current assessments as bases for action plans; (11) that the staff continually evaluate existing programs and explore new programs to enhance the mission and ministry of the church; (12) that in light of the current weakening economy, level of giving, and population demographics of the church, the congregation incur only a minimum level of debt at this time and that a Building Fund be established for future expansion or relocation; (13) that the Constitution and By-Laws Committee revise its document to reflect the congregation's decisions on the foregoing recommendations; (14) that the Church Council oversee the implementation of congregational decisions on these recommendations.

²³⁰ *The Chrysalis*, November 18, 2008.

Furthermore, the Wingate Church also decided by ballot to pursue further conversation with the University regarding the physical plant by a vote of 111 (57%) for and 83 (43%) against. This vote did not obligate the church beyond conversation. In a final vote, the church approved (175-17) a special *ad hoc* committee to continue the study of facility needs of the Wingate Baptist Church to enable the congregation to fulfill its mission and ministry according to its understanding of God's calling.²³¹

As 2008 ended, the Wingate Church set its face to the future, believing in God's faithful guidance and the people's willingness to respond to his calling. But for a few moments in 2009, Wingate must remember and celebrate two hundred years of being God's people in this place.

²³¹ Minutes of the Church Conference, November 16, 2008; *The Chrysalis*, November 18, 2008.

CONCLUSION

For two centuries, the Meadow Branch/Wingate Baptist Church has nurtured faithful Christians from generation to generation. Early on it accepted Jesus' clear and abiding call:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. (Matthew 28:18b-20)

By the 1830s Meadow Branch was firmly committed to missionary outreach, encouraging its members to give talent, time, and financial resources to further the cause of Christ. Through the decades, even centuries, its response to Jesus' call has never disappeared; indeed in recent times the outreach of the church has stretched from the local trailer park to the far side of the world.

Meadow Branch also affirmed that the human mind is the gift of God and human knowledge, rightly guided by God's Word of Truth, is the means whereby man relates to the created order. So Meadow Branch taught its children about God's world and the Biblical commandments to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind...and your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:37-39) Over a century ago, this church joined with like-minded Baptists to establish a school not only for their own children, but for the children of the world. They poured their life's blood into Wingate College. That small beginning has become a thriving University producing young leaders for society and churches as well as accomplished professionals for business, public education and public health.

The Wingate Baptist Church has valued and preserved the age-old foundation principles of Christianity and maintained the historic Baptist witness to the authority of the Bible, the autonomy of the local congregation, the separation of church from the state, and the competency of the individual soul before God. Yet it has also breathed the fresh air of twentieth century truths which have become self-evident: male and female God created mankind and planted in their breasts both the discipline of following and the potential of leading.

Within itself, Wingate has nurtured lay servant-ministers who labor alongside pastors to care for the congregation in crisis and peace.

The church has embraced as brothers and sisters Christians of different persuasions who affirm that Jesus Christ is Lord, that His cross is God's love, and that His resurrection is the hope of eternity. It has ministered to the nations and to those in the neighborhood who need both physical food and drink and the spiritual sustenance of the good news of God's love.

As we begin a third century, the mandate of the Great Commission is more powerful in the Wingate Baptist Church than at any other period of our history. And to live it daily is our thanksgiving offering to God. So may it be.

Appendix to Part II

1985-2009

Pastors

Dr. Roy N. Ford, Jr., 1979-1985
Dr. H. Mitchell Simpson, 1986-1990
Dr. Jim Somerville, 1991-2000
Dr. J. Derrill Smith, 2001-Present

Minister of Education/Associate Pastor

Cheryl Lane, 1993-1996
Blythe Taylor, 1997-2001
Brenda Collins, 2004-Present

Minister of Music

Dr. Ronald Bostic, 1981-Present

Minister of Youth

Bob Lowman, 1981-83
Lynn Cox, 1983-84
Karla Lowman, 1984
Carol Story, 1986-88
Esther McSwain, 1988
Lynn Moss, 1988-89
Phillip Capps, 1989
Kristi Wilkins, Keith Murray, 1990
David Sherwood, 1990-Present

Organist

Ann Williams, 1980-1996
Polly Bostic, 1996-Present

Weekday Childcare Director

Brenda Tomberlin, 1979-89
Ann Stone, 1989-90
Brenda Tomberlin, 1990-96

Sally Williams, 1996-Present

Church Secretary/Administrative Assistant

Helen Helms, 1965-88
Glenda Spivey, 1988-92
Melody Revell, 1992-97
Karen Nash, 1997-1999
Angie Trull, 1999-2001
Karen Nash, 2001-02
Dorothy Wade, 2002-04
Annette Moser, 2004-Present

Church Clerk

Helen Helms 1970-1994
Linda Mangum, 1994-1999
Linda Isner, 1999-2006
Pam Merrill, 2006-Present

Sunday School Superintendent

Clifford Adams, 1977-85
Steve Smith, 1985-86
Jim Edwards, 1986-87
Jane McCoy, 1987-90
Robert Doak, 1990-95
Bill Braswell, Jr., 1996-2002
James Hall, 2002-Present

Ordained to the Christian Ministry

Bobby Lee Lowman, January 5, 1986
Brenda Collins, November 7, 2004
Ginger Tucker, September 7, 2008

Board of Deacons. Elected to Three Year Term beginning January 1,

1983

Harry Chaney
Frances Crooke
Jim Edwards
Gladys Hinson
Coy May

1984

John Clawson
Alice Coleman
Jerry Kirkman
Harvey Michael
Gene Morgan

1985

Tom Crooke, Sr.
Bob Doak
George Gerding
Max Thomas
Bob Young

1986

Bill Braswell, Jr.
Ed Jones
Jim McCoy
Walter Perry
Stephen Smith

1987

Frances Crooke
Gladys Hinson
Elaine Kirkman
Frank McGuirt
Jerry Thomas

1988

Jim Edwards
Art Holder
Bob Isner
Jane McCoy
Don Merrill

1989

Corinna Bivens
Beverly Christopher
Sidney Fletcher
Carolyn Gaddy
Harvey Michael
Max Thomas

1990

Bill Braswell, Jr.
John Mangum
Gene Morgan
Bob Doak
Jim McCoy
Steve Smith

1991

Angela Bell
Alice Coleman
Elaine Kirkman
David Sherwood
Margaret Williams
Myron Williams

1992

Mike Chudalski
Frances Crooke
Grace Daniels
Gladys Hinson
Don Merrill
Bill Nash

1993

Lynn Moss
Harvey Michael
Betty Griffin
Sidney Fletcher
Max Thomas
Beverly Christopher

1994

Chris Billinger
Bill Braswell, Jr.
John Clawson
Gene Morgan
Jerry Thomas
Ginger Tucker

1995

Mike Hamilton
Billy Hargett
Richard Stegall
Margaret Williams
Walter Woodson

1996

Greg Bell
Myzelle Fletcher
C. T. Harris
Elaine Kirkman
John Mangum

1997

Carolyn Braswell
Betty Griffin
Tom Lowery
Mary Maye
Harvey Michael

1995

Bob Young

1996

Don Merrill

Brent Moser

Myron Williams

1997

Bill Nash

David Rushing

Max Thomas

1998

Chris Billinger

Mike Chudalski

Dale Dupree

Gene Morgan

Don Perry

Andy Small

David Story

Jerry Surratt

1999

Beverly Christopher

Carroll Griffin

Billy Hargett

Jennifer Hoerning

Jerry Kirkman

Ron McMahan

Jimmy Norwood

Bob Young

2000

Bill Braswell

Frances Crooke

C. T. Harris

Brent Moser

Chris Ponds

Suzy Setser

Richard Stegall

Myron Williams

2001

Sharon Chudalski

Bob Doak

Ella Hargett

Bill Mason

Edie Perry

Joe Ray

Margaret Williams

Walter Woodson

2002

Elaine Kirkman

Johnny Lowery

Bob Mayton

Jarrod McCraw

Harvey Michael

Bill Nash

Jerry Taylor

Max Thomas

2003

Carolyn Braswell

Bill Hargett, Jr.

Jennifer Hoerning

Bob McGee

Don Merrill

Hal Setser

Joe Sproule

Chuck Taylor

2004

Bob Billinger

Beverly Christopher

Frances Crooke

John Mangum

Brent Moser

Jim Muldrow

Richard Stegall

Bob Young

2005

Elaine Austin

Mike Chudalski

Ella Hargett

Jerry Kirkman

Edie Perry

Joe Ray

Brad Sellers

Jerry Thomas

Margaret Williams

2006

Kay Jo Baucom

Betty Griffin

Harvey Michael

Suzy Setser

John Sykes

Carol Taylor

Jerry Taylor

Myron Williams

2007

Gary Bodford
Bill Braswell
Bill Buttrell
Bob Doak
Bill Hargett
Sherry Kapelar
Jarrod McCraw
Mike Mangum

2008

Bob Billinger
Ron Croft
Griggs McCorkle
Don Merrill
Brent Moser
Jim Muldrow
Richard Stegall
Peggy Taylor

2009

Louise Glover
Marie Godwin
Ella Hargett
Barbara Morgan
Brad Sellers
Jerry Thomas
Carole Williams
Sonny Ziegler

The Church Roster - 2008

***Indicates Church Member**

Clifford Z. Adams*	Cory Blackburn*	Jeff Carrier
Bill Alston	Gary Bodford*	Heather Carrier*
Billy Austin*	Janice Bodford*	Connor Carrier
Blair Austin*	Michelle Bodford*	Dianne Carter*
Wyatt Austin	Homer Boone*	Bob Caudle
Elaine Austin*	Benjamin Bostic*	Kathy Caudle
Linda Austin*	Christy Bostic*	Ron Christopher*
Angie Jones*	Ron Bostic*	Beverly Christopher*
Adam Jones*	Polly Bostic*	Mike Chudalski*
Anna Jones*	Suzanne Bostic*	Sharon Chudalski*
Phillip Austin*	Bill G. Braswell*	Adelaide Clawson*
Cheryl Austin*	Carolyn Braswell*	G. Byrns Coleman*
Olin William Austin	Molly Braswell*	Alice Coleman*
Ashlin Pearl Austin	Johnny P. Braswell*	John Coleman*
Tom Autry*	Doris Braswell*	Sharon Coleman*
Edwin Bagley*	Martha Braswell*	Brenda Collins*
Cheryl Bagley*	Ligon Bundy	Helen Cowsert*
Ronnie Baucom	Linda Bundy	Bob Cox
Kay Jo Baucom*	Liz Bundy	Deborah Cox*
Katelyn Baucom*	Joseph Bundy	C.J. Cox*
Scarlett Belk*	Gladys Burns*	Steven Cox*
Angela Bell*	Steve Burns*	Ronald Croft*
Greg Bell*	Sarah Burns*	Eleanor Croft*
Brian Benton*	Rayanne Burns*	Jason Croft*
Crystal Benton*	Bill Buttrell*	Katheryn E. Crook*
Brian Benton, Jr.	Doris Buttrell*	Baron Crook
Mackenzie Benton	Heather Buttrell*	Bess Crook
Robert Billinger*	Steve Carpenter	Bryce Crook
Cheryl Billinger	Sandra Carpenter*	Tom Crooke*
Eula R. Bivens*	Charlie Blackburn*	Frances Crooke*

Elga Cuthbertson*	Sidney Fletcher*	Tim Harrell*
	Myzelle Fletcher*	Connie Harrell*
Tommy Cuthbertson*		T.J Harrell*
Donna Cuthbertson*	Grace Flowers*	Trae Harrell*
Zachary Cuthbertson*		Tariah Harrell*
Della Cuthbertson*	Jenniffer Floyd*	
		Wallace Hasty*
Grace Daniels*	Bobby W. Ford*	Martha Hasty*
	Mike Ford*	
John W. Daniels*		Brian Hehn*
Janet Daniels*	John M. Fulgham*	Eve Hehn*
Tina Day*	Chris Garlow*	Tina Heid*
Joseph (Joey) Burns*		
Savannah Burns*	Ronald Glover*	Donald R. Helms
	Louise Glover*	Margaret Helms
Robert Doak*	Chris Glover*	Evan Helms
Darlene Doak*		
Trent Doak*	Marie Godwin*	Gary Helms*
Dale Dupree*	Betty Griffin*	Helen Helms*
Laraine Dupree*		
	Lib Griffin*	J. Don Helms
Mattie Dupree*		
	Todd Griffin*	Guillermo Hernandez*
Donna Dodson*	Pam Griffin*	Laura Hernandez*
	Benton Griffin	Ana Hernandez
William Eason		Jouhette Hernandez
Camelia Eason*	James Hall*	William Hernandez
Max Edwards	Mike Hall*	Chattie Himmelman*
Christine Edwards	Melissa Hall*	
	Alexander Henry Hall	Durrell Hinson*
Louise Eudy*	Kylie Hall*	Margaret Hinson*
Mitchell Eudy*	Robin Hampton	Gregory Hinson*
Marilyn Eudy*		Paige Hinson*
Virginia Eudy*	Bill P. Hargett, Jr.*	Emily Hinson
Morgan Eudy*	Debbie Hargett*	Abby Hinson
Abigail Eudy*		
Madelyn Eudy*	Ella Hargett*	Mary Alice Hinson
		Alex Hinson*
Jim Evans	Gladys Hargett*	Mary Katherine Hinson*
Wanda Evans		
	Ty Hargett*	Dan Hooker
Brooks Felt*		Tamra Hooker*

Charlie Hudson	Paul Larrimore*	Roger C. Maye*
Julie Hudson		Mary Maye*
Spencer Hudson	Peter Larrimore*	Elizabeth Maye*
Walker Hudson	Carol Larrimore*	William Maye*
	Christin Larrimore*	
Bill Hunnicutt*	Joseph Larrimore*	Tony Maye*
Joann Hunnicutt*	Jennifer Larrimore*	Shaun Maye
	Peter Michael Larrimore*	McKenzie Provost
		Paxton Provost
James Hyatt*		
Lori Hyatt*	Eleanor Little*	
Riley Hyatt		Linda McClary*
Marta Hyatt	S. J. Little*	Lauren McClary
	Jean Little*	Carla McClary
Mark Jacobs		
Desha Perry Jacobs*	Sylvia Little-Sweat*	Griggs McCorkle*
Elijah Jacobs		Margaret McCorkle*
Isaiah Jacobs	John Lowery, Sr.*	
		Bob McCoy*
Johnny Jacumin*	John Lowery, Jr.*	Kristin McCoy*
Cookie Jacumin*	Emily Lowery*	Ashleigh McCoy
Jamie Jones*	Josh Lowery*	Jerry McGee*
Margaret Jones	Ashley Lowery	Marcella McGee
Jamie II, "Chris" Jones*		
Andrew Jones	Nancy G. Lowery*	Frank McGuirt*
Bryce Jones		Jenny McGuirt*
	Rick Mackey	Will McGuirt*
Buck Jordan	Janet Mackey*	Jonathan McGuirt
Gail Jordan	Carson Mackey	
Carrie Jordan	Travis Mackey	Ron McMahan*
Charlotte Jordan		Linda McMahan*
	Carrie Mangum*	
John Kapelar*		Sara McMahan*
Sherry Kapelar*	John B. Mangum*	
	Linda Mangum*	Donald Merrill*
Gerardo Karim		Pamela Merrill*
Emma Karim*	Mike Mangum*	David Merrill*
	Angie Mangum*	
Rosa Karim*		Lisa Merrill*
	William C. Mason*	
Jerry Kirkman*	Marie Mason*	Harvey Michael*
Elaine Kirkman*		Macie Michael*
	Jeff Mathews	
Thelma Lanning*	Bess Braswell*	Stephanie Miller
Joseph S. Larrimore*	Jacksie Maye*	Lilia Montero*
Edith Larrimore*		

Daniel Morgan*
Carolina Morgan
Keith Morgan

Danny S. Morgan*
Barbara Morgan*

Gene Morgan*
Edna Morgan*

Doris Moser*

J. Brent Moser*
Annette Moser*

Jim Muldrow*
Cheryl Muldrow*

Harry Myers*
Jean Myers*

Bill H. Nash*
Lucas Nash*
David Nash*

Colbey Oakes*
Christine Buttrell*
Camden Oakes

Brian Odom
Amee Huneycutt Odom*

Kent Palmer

Joseph W. Pegram
Sharon W. Pegram*

Donald C. Perry*
Edie Perry*

Jesse G. Perry*
Sandra Perry*
Jessie Perry
Matthew Perry

Richard Perry*
Annette Perry*

Walter Perry*
Frances Perry*

Ann Pierce*

Todd Platt*

Chris Ponds*
Laura Ponds*
Taylor Ponds*
Mackenzie Ponds*

Joseph Ray*
Denise Ray*
Bethany Ray*
Tiffany Ray*

Dale Robinson
Andrea Robinson*
Emily Robinson

Kim Ross
Jane Ross
Evan Ross*

David M. Rushing*
Marsha H. Rushing*
Madeline Rushing*

Ronald Rushing*
Kay Rushing*
Brandon Rushing
Brock Rushing

Brad Sellers*
Ginger Sellers*
Mollie Sellers*
Matt Sellers*

Michael Sellers*

Hal Setser*
Suzy Setzer*
Clay Setzer*

Kenny Sharp
Holly Sharp*

Bob Shaw*
Susan Shaw*

David Sherwood*

Juel Sherwood*

Nancy Sherwood*

Brandon Smith*
Sara Smith
Chauncey Smith

Derrill Smith*
Cindy Smith*
Caroline Smith*

Don Smith
Maxine Smith*

Stephen Smith*
Kay Smith*

Joseph T. Sproule, II*
Lori B. Sproule*
Carson Sproule

Jamie St. Clair
Jennifer St. Clair*
Anderson St. Clair
Parker St. Clair
Peyton St. Clair

Blair Stegall*

Randy Stegall*
Mindy Stegall*
David Stegall
Emily Stegall

Richard Stegall*
Beth Stegall*
Callie Stegall*

Travis Stegall*

Anne Stover*

Jerry L. Surratt*

Alice Surratt*

John Sykes*

Becky Sykes*

Daniel Sykes*

Owen Sykes*

Lyndia Tart*

Chuck Taylor*

Carol Taylor*

Dick Taylor*

Peggy Taylor*

Ryan Taylor*

Jay Taylor*

Jerry Taylor*

Jerrie Taylor*

Tim Terhune*

Casey Terhune*

Christina (Tina) Martin

Katherine(Katie) Covey*

Jerry W. Thomas*

Ann Thomas*

Joyce Thomas*

Trent Thomas*

Linda Trull*

Ann Williams*

April Williams*

Rachel Harmon*

Charles R. Williams*

Margaret Williams*

Linda Williams*

Marvin Williams*

Nancy Williams

Myron Williams*

Lesa Williams*

Richard Belk*

Tyler Belk*

Camden Williams

Sally Williams*

Susan Williams*

Tom Williams*

Carole Williams*

Joanna Woodson*

Walter Woodson*

Phyllis Woodson*

Robert S. Young*

Dawn Young*

Sonny Ziegler*

Chris Ziegler*

Todd Zimmer

Elizabeth Zimmer*

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

**Wingate Baptist Church
Wingate, North Carolina**

Revised 08/31/08

THE CONSTITUTION AND
BY LAWS
OF THE
STATE OF
NEW YORK

CONSTITUTION AND BY LAWS

OF THE
STATE OF
NEW YORK
IN SENATE
JANUARY 1891
ALBANY: J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO. PRINTERS
1891

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS
Wingate Baptist Church Wingate, North Carolina
Revised 08/31/08

CONSTITUTION
ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this church shall be Wingate Baptist Church, a nonprofit corporation, having its address in Wingate, North Carolina.

ARTICLE IA - CORPORATE IDENTITY

Wherein this Constitution and By-Laws the word "church" appears, the same shall also mean "nonprofit corporation."

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

The purpose of this church shall be to uphold and provide opportunities for public worship; to promote Christian fellowship, service, and growth among its members; to nurture its members through a program of Christian education; and to proclaim the Gospel of the revelation of God through Jesus Christ through evangelism and missionary outreach.

ARTICLE III – COVENANT

- To honor God with our lives, seeking first his kingdom and his righteousness, supporting the total mission of our church with our prayers, time, abilities, and money.
- To live as disciples, seeking ever to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
- To attend and support the worship of this church, its ordinances, discipline and doctrine.
- To labor together in Christian fellowship, exercising brotherly love toward one another, praying for each other, being mindful of and sharing one another's joys, burdens, and sorrows, and always being slow to take offense and eager for reconciliation.

- To live as Christians in the world, being just in our dealings and faithful in our obligations.
- To regard as the household of faith all who worship Christ as Lord, and while holding to our Baptist convictions and heritage, seeking with all Christians a unity of spirit and purpose.
- To live as Christians in our homes, engaging in family and individual devotions, teaching our children by instruction and example that Christ is Savior and Lord.
- To endeavor by example and effort to win others to faith in and commitment to Christ.
- To become active members of another church when circumstances require our separation
- from this one.

ARTICLE IV - STATEMENT OF FAITH

Since the Wingate Baptist Church does not endorse a creed, the church accepts as an informational statement the Articles of Faith endorsed by the Southern Baptist Convention in May 1963 and recorded in The Baptist Faith and Message.

ARTICLE V – RELATIONSHIPS

The government of this church is vested in the body of Christian believers. It recognizes the obligation of mutual counsel and cooperation, which are common among Baptist churches. This church shall seek to cooperate with the programs of the Union Baptist Association, the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina, and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

ARTICLE VI - ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS

Section 1. This Constitution shall be considered in effect when approved by two-thirds of the members present and voting at a regularly scheduled business meeting provided that the Constitution was provided in

writing at least thirty (30) days prior to the time when the vote is taken.

Section 2. This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at any regular business meeting of the church provided that such amendment is read at a previous business meeting and provided in writing to all members of the church present and entitled to vote.

Section 3. All previous church action contrary to the provision of this Constitution is hereby rescinded.

BY-LAWS
ARTICLE I –CHURCH YEARS

The Church Program Year shall be from September 1 to August 31.

The Church Fiscal Year shall be from January 1 to December 31.

ARTICLE IA – MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Eligibility for Membership

Anyone professing faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and adopting the views of faith and practice held by this church, together with its covenant and constitution, may be received into membership in this church.

Section 2. Candidate

A person may offer himself/herself as a candidate for membership in this church by one of the following ways:

- A. By profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and for baptism by immersion.
- B. By promise of a letter from another Baptist church.
- C. By promise of a letter from another Christian church providing that membership in that church required profession of faith and baptism in some form.
- D. By statement of prior conversion experience when a letter is not obtainable.
- E. By spiritual watch care. Persons who are temporary residents in the area of this church may come under the spiritual watch care of this church, but they shall not vote in church business conference, serve on the Diaconate, or represent the church in other assemblies.

Section 3. Procedure for Membership

- A. A person may present himself/herself for membership during regularly scheduled or special worship services of this church and be

admitted into full membership when they have fulfilled the other membership requirements of these By-Laws.

- B. New members will participate in new member orientation class or classes.

Section 4. Duties of Members

The duty of the members of this church shall be to obey their covenant vows.

Section 5. Inactive and Non-Resident Members

- A. An inactive member is a member who does not participate in any way in the church for two (2) years.
- B. A non-resident member is a member who does not live in Union County and who does not participate in any way in the life of the church for two (2) years.
- C. The inactive and non-resident member will be notified of their status, and their names will be kept on an inactive roll for future reference. Their names will be returned to the active membership roll when they resume their active status.

Section 6. Termination of Membership

Methods of terminating membership shall be as follows:

- A. A letter to unite with another Christian church may be issued, upon request, to another Christian church for any member of this church.
- B. When a member dies or requests that his/her name be removed.

ARTICLE II - CHURCH OFFICERS

Section 1. Pastor

The Pastor shall be an ordained Baptist minister. He/she shall be called by the church upon the recommendation of the Pastor Search Committee to serve until this relationship is dissolved by either the

Pastor or the church. His/her election shall be by secret ballot and shall take place at a meeting called for this purpose with at least one week's notice given to the congregation. A three-fourths (3/4) vote of those present and voting at the meeting shall constitute a call.

The relationship may be terminated by the Pastor's resignation or by the majority vote of the members present and voting at a called business meeting of the church after due notice of the purpose of such a meeting has been given to the congregation. In either case, thirty days' notice of the termination shall be required.

The Pastor shall be the spiritual leader of the church. The Pastor shall lead the church as it carries out its purpose and work with the church officers and committees as they accomplish their tasks. The Pastor will be an ex-officio member of all committees and lead the deacons as they assist in the performance of the pastoral responsibilities. The Pastor shall direct and coordinate the work of the ministers and all employees of the church. The Pastor shall review all church personnel annually with the Personnel Committee and make recommendations to the Personnel Committee for any changes in salary and benefits. The Pastor is responsible for the worship services and administering the ordinances and shall serve in whatever ways he/she and the church mutually agrees to be in the best interests of Christ's kingdom. In summary, the Pastor will apply his/her talents as best able with God's help to lead the church in accomplishing its work.

Section 2. Ministers

The church shall call ministers as needed to carry out its purpose. These ministers shall be recommended to the Personnel Committee by the committee of the church

responsible for that particular area of the church's ministry. A detailed job description shall be prepared by the Pastor for each position prior to the call and shall be agreed upon by the nominee, the committee making the recommendation, and the Personnel Committee. A general description of the position shall be presented to the church at the time of nomination.

The election and termination procedures described for the Pastor shall also apply to the ministers.

The ministers shall be responsible to the church for the activities in their respective areas, but they shall work under the direction of the Pastor and in cooperation with the appropriate church committee. Ministers currently employed by the church include:

Associate Pastor - Job description on file in church office.

Minister of Music - Job description on file in church office.

Minister of Youth - Job description on file in church office.

Director of Children's Ministries - Job description on file in church office.

Organist - Job description on file in church office.

Section 3. Administrative Assistant

The Administrative Assistant shall be recommended by the Personnel Committee to the church for approval and shall serve until the Church/Administrative Assistant relationship is dissolved. The Personnel Committee will be responsible for maintaining a detailed description of the Administrative Assistant's responsibilities.

Section 4. Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer

The Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer of the church shall be elected annually. The Treasurer shall be a member of the Stewardship Committee. Duties:

- A. Receive and verify the summary of receipts and bank deposit slips.
- B. Disburse funds after receiving properly signed supporting documents. These documents may be authorized by either the Pastor or the chairperson of the Stewardship Committee.

- C. Reconcile monthly bank statements and prepare quarterly and annual statements of receipts and disbursements, and a balance sheet, which are presented to the Stewardship Committee and to the church.

Section 5. Trustees

- A. There shall be three trustees of the church elected at the annual business meeting.
- B. At least annually, the trustees will review all aspects of the property and liability insurance program of the church, determine needs, and obtain the necessary coverage. All policies and records relating to this insurance will be retained and maintained by the trustees.
- C. The term of office of one-third of the number of trustees will expire each year, and election shall be held to fill the vacancies. After serving three years, no trustee shall be eligible for reelection until the lapse of at least one year.
- D. The senior trustee will become the corporate officer for purposes of corporation documents.

Section 6. Clerk

The Clerk is elected annually to serve a one-year term.

- A. Keeping the minutes: Record, in permanent form, the transactions of the church business and maintain a complete set of reports and minutes, which shall be available in the office of the Church Secretary.
- B. Implementing the minutes: The clerk will notify church members of actions taken in the business meetings and inform all officers, members of committees and messengers of their election or appointment.
- C. Keeping the Church Roll: Maintain an accurate roll of the church membership.
- D. Prepare the annual letter to the Association which reports the membership, finances, and activities of the church.

Section 7. Moderator

The Moderator is elected annually and is to make preparation for and preside at all church conferences.

Section 8. Historian

The Historian shall find ways to help church members understand and learn from the church's own history as well as our Baptist heritage. This person will seek to gather and preserve all historic records of the church and to assist in recording current activities.

Section 9. Audio-Visual Technician

The Audio-Visual Technician shall oversee the management of audio-visual resources so that they are available when needed for church events. This person shall enlist and train assistants as needed; maintain sound and recording equipment; request and administer budget expenses; inventory and secure equipment after use; and review system operations and make recommendations for improvement.

Section 10. Public Relations Director

The Public Relations Director shall communicate the church's ministry to church members, prospects, and the surrounding community. This person shall seek to develop plans for communicating church programs to the church and to the community; to assist the staff and other committees in producing communication materials; to assist the staff and other committees in determining public opinion, both within the church and outside; to assist in communicating to the church and the community special recognitions, achievements, etc., of the church and individual members; to promote an awareness that good public relations is the work of all church members.

ARTICLE III – DIACONATE

Diaconate

A. Qualification, Number, Election, Term of Service

1. Any member of the church who is eighteen years of age or older may be eligible to serve as a deacon.
2. The Diaconate shall seek to maintain a ratio of one deacon for every twelve families in the church.
3. The deacons shall be elected at a church conference on the first Sunday in September. During the week preceding the election, each church member will be furnished a list of those eligible to be deacons (only one person from each household may serve as a deacon at any given time). Every member of the church shall have one vote for each vacancy. Without nomination, on the first Sunday in September, secret ballots shall be cast to fill the existing vacancies. Those persons receiving the highest number of votes shall be contacted by the pastor and asked the following question: "You have been elected as a deacon. Are you willing to serve?" Those giving an affirmative reply, up to the required number, will be presented to the church on the following Sunday for acclamation and will be declared elected for a three-year term. In case any one of those contacted declines, the pastor shall have the authority to contact the one receiving the next highest vote. If a tie occurs for the last place, then the deacons will be responsible for using a fair and impartial means of choosing the last person.
4. The term of office will be January through December. The term of office of one-third of the number of deacons will expire each year, and election shall be held to fill the vacancies. After serving three years, no deacon shall be eligible for reelection until the lapse of at least one year.
5. In case of death, removal, or incapacity to serve when there is more than six months' term of service remaining, the vacancy will be filled by special

appointment. A committee consisting of the deacon chairperson, chairperson-elect, and pastor will select a replacement from a pool consisting of members who have previously served Wingate Baptist as deacons and are otherwise eligible to serve. The term of appointment shall be the exact unfilled portion of the previous deacon's term and shall begin immediately upon acceptance by the appointee.

B. Duties

In accordance with the meaning of the word and the practice of the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the church.

1. They are to be zealous to guard the unity of the spirit within the church in the bonds of peace.
2. They shall serve as a council of advice and conference with the pastor in all matters pertaining to the welfare and work of the church. With the pastor they are to consider and formulate plans for the constant effort and progress of the church in all things pertaining to the saving of souls, the development of Christians, and the extension and growth of the kingdom of God.
3. By proper organization and method among themselves, they are to establish and maintain personal fraternal relations with, and inspiring oversight of, all the membership of the church. Especially are they to seek to know the physical needs and the moral and spiritual struggles of the members; and to serve the whole church in relieving, encouraging, and developing all who are in need.
4. The chairperson shall serve as moderator at business meetings of the church in the absence of the moderator or as directed by the Diaconate.

C. Meetings

1. A regular meeting of the Diaconate shall be held at a time and place decided mutually by the deacons and pastor.
2. The Diaconate may, upon proper notice, meet at any other time the affairs of the church may require such a meeting.
3. The Diaconate shall be organized as a unit for carrying out the duties previously stated. They may organize themselves into such committees as their wisdom may direct for efficiency in service.
4. They shall elect their chairperson and a chairperson-elect from among the members at the first regular meeting in each calendar year. The chairperson-elect will serve as chairman in the following year.
5. A majority of the deacons shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting.

ARTICLE IV - STANDING COMMITTEES

Section 1. General

All church committee members and special committees shall be recommended by the Nominating Committee and elected by the church unless otherwise stated in the description below. Committees shall elect their own chairperson, vice-chairperson, and secretary at their first regular meeting.

Acceptance by a church member of election to a committee implies an intention to be active in the work of that committee. Each committee shall obtain an adequate knowledge of appropriate procedure in its field of service; promptly and faithfully discharge its duties; meet regularly (at least once a quarter) for business and fellowship; request financial allocations through the Stewardship Committee; and supervise the expenditure of allotted funds.

The outgoing chair of each committee will be responsible for calling the first meeting by September 30 to elect a new chairperson.

Section 2. Church Council

The Church Council shall recommend to the congregation suggested church goals; review and coordinate program plans recommended by church officers, organizations, and committees; recommend to the congregation the use of leadership, calendar time, and other resources according to program priorities; and evaluate program achievements in terms of church goals and objectives.

The Council shall have as regular members: the Pastor, Associate Pastor, Minister of Music, Minister of Youth, Director of Children's Ministries, Church Secretary, Chairperson of the Deacons, Treasurer, Clerk, Sunday School Director, Woman's Missionary Union Director, Chair of the Baptist Men, President of the Good-timers Group, Associational Representative, and chairpersons of all Standing committees. The associate pastor shall serve as the presiding officer.

In the absence of the associate pastor, the pastor or council shall designate the presiding officer.

The Church Council shall be responsible for appointing the Memorials Committee, which is a sub-committee of the church council. The following standing committee chairs will serve on the Memorials Committee: Stewardship, Properties, Library, Kitchen/Social, Music and Sanctuary. The senior pastor and church council moderator will service as ex-officio members. The Memorial Committee's responsibilities and duties are on file in the church office.

Section 3. Standing Committees

Standing Committees shall be recommended by the Nominating Committee and elected by the church to serve a three-year term unless otherwise stated.

The Baptism Committee shall be composed of at least six (6) members with an equal number of men and women. The committee shall manage baptismal equipment and provide support for the sacrament itself. Its duties are:

1. To see that all necessary baptismal equipment and facilities are available and in order prior to each service (includes filling and checking temperature of baptismal pool).
2. To meet the candidates at the appointed time and show them to the dressing rooms. Answer questions that may arise and be sure each candidate has a robe, towel, and handkerchief.
3. To assist pastor in the ordering of candidates.
4. To assist candidates into and out of the pool and to the dressing room.
5. To appoint one member to assist the pastor before and after the service.
6. To arrange for the baptismal garments, towels, and other supplies to be prepared for the next service.

The Bereavement Committee shall serve the needs of bereaved church families. This committee shall be composed of five (5) regular members with WMU Director, Deacon on Call, and the Family Deacon serving as ex-officio members. Its duties are:

1. To assure that the evening meal just prior to the funeral home visitation is served and that adequate help is provided.
2. To assure adequate clean-up service for the meal just prior to or just after the funeral service.
3. To assure that there is enough food for these meals.

The Christian Life/Family Ministries Committee shall plan activities that focus on and enrich the family... not just the traditional nuclear family, but the broader definition of the Christian family that is marked by inclusiveness of younger singles, the elderly, and the "extended" family of the

church as a whole. This committee shall be composed of five (5) members. Its duties are:

1. To plan recreational and special occasion events and educational meetings that focus on family life.
2. To plan retreats for married couples, newlyweds, engaged couples, and singles seeking to develop relational skills.
3. To lead the church in dealing with social and moral issues such as citizenship, race relations, hunger, alcohol and drug abuse, peace with justice.

The **Communion Committee** shall work with the pastor in providing for this sacrament to the church fellowship and scheduling of it as part of the life of our church. This committee shall be composed of six (6) members. Its duties are:

1. To supervise the care, maintenance, and provision of the Communion trays, cups, plates, and cloths to be used and recommend any additions to the equipment as it becomes necessary.
2. To prepare or secure the elements to be used for the Communion and place them in the sanctuary.
3. To see that the trays, plates, cups, and cloths are cleaned after they are used.

The **Constitution and By-Laws Committee** shall seek to bring the church's Constitution and By-Laws more in line with current realities and needs. Its duties are:

1. Shall meet no less than once a year to study the Constitution and By-Laws.
2. To recommend changes called for by their study, suggestions from the pastor, the Church Council, Committees, or by church growth or shifting responsibilities of church leadership and newly perceived areas of ministry.

The **Daycare Committee** shall administer the program of weekday education by serving as a liaison group between the director of the program and the church members. This

committee shall be composed of six (6) members. The duties of this committee are:

1. To determine policies and procedures for operating and administering the program.
2. To select and present to the church for approval all Daycare personnel.
3. To work with the director in determining a budget for the program.
4. To see that the program and facilities comply with legal and licensing requirements.
5. To direct efforts to inform, involve, and educate church members about the program.
6. To coordinate work of the program with other church activities.
7. To review reports and records to insure proper operation of the program. Report this information regularly to the church for awareness and approval.
8. To work with the Director to insure that adequate background checks on all Daycare applicants are performed prior to hiring.
9. To review annual evaluations on all Daycare personnel and consult with the Director on salary and benefit recommendations.
10. To conduct annual evaluation of Director with the Pastor and recommend salary and benefit changes to the Personnel Committee.

The Kitchen/Social Committee shall assist the church in administering its food services effectively. This committee shall be composed of the necessary number of members. Its duties are:

1. To establish and administer general policies concerning the operation of the kitchen and dining room.
2. To see that the kitchen is equipped with the necessary utensils and expendable supplies.

3. To serve as official host or hostess at all church-sponsored dinners, socials, receptions, and special celebrations.

The Library Committee shall promote the use of library materials by church members. This committee shall be composed of six (6) members. Its duties are:

1. To determine and establish library policies, rules, and regulations which shall determine the use of the library.
2. To give general oversight to the library, properly cataloging new books, magazines, and audio-visual materials and keeping an accurate record of the circulation of materials.
3. To guide the promotional program of the library in general areas of publicity.
4. To be responsible for selecting and ordering books and materials for the library in accordance with the needs of the church.
5. To be available to assist in the selection of books to be given as memorials or in honor of some person.

The Membership Committee shall be the primary initial contact between the church and the visitors. This committee shall consist of six (6) or seven (7) members. Its duties are:

1. To collect visitor's cards and Friendship Pad sheets that are filled out at Sunday morning worship service and to make contact with the visitor(s) through visits, telephone, cards, or any means the committee deems necessary.
2. To assist in greeting visitors in Sunday morning services, WNA!, or any other church functions.
3. To assist the deacons in making contact with members who are not presently attending, and to encourage them to become active again in the life of the church.

The Missions/Evangelism Committee shall lead the church in being the church, reaching people for Christ. This committee shall be composed of five (5) members. Its duties are:

1. To study local mission needs and recommend plans to the church for meeting the needs found.
2. To work with program organizations within the church on mission activities that they perform for the church.
3. To seeks ways to encourage church members to reach unchurched people in the community.
4. To work with the pastor in planning evangelistic and mission activities.

The Music Committee shall consult with the Minister of Music regarding major decisions affecting the ministry. The Minister of Music and organist shall be ex-officio members. This committee shall be composed of six (6) members. Its duties are:

1. To assist the pastor and program organization leaders in planning and implementing major programs, performances, and dedications in which the Minister of Music has a major part.
2. To recommend the purchase of any additional or replacement musical instruments.

The Nominating Committee shall lead in staffing all church-elected positions filled by volunteers including vacancies, which occur during the year. This committee shall be composed of six (6) members. Its duties are:

1. To nominate annually the Director of the Sunday School and Vacation Bible School.
2. To work closely with the program organization directors to insure that all positions are filled and secure replacements when vacancies occur.
3. To nominate all departmental directors and Sunday School teachers. These begin service September 1.

4. To nominate all committee members and appropriate officers. These begin service September 1.
5. To maintain an up-to-date roster of opportunities to serve in the church.
6. All outgoing Chairpersons should be notified that it is their duty to call the new committee together to elect a Chairperson from their membership as soon as possible within September. (The By-Laws Committee would like to see a committee orientation meeting within that month also.)

The Personnel Committee shall have responsibility for staffing and hiring of all church staff, except for the pastor, and administer personnel-related functions for all employees. This committee shall be composed of six (6) members. Its duties are:

1. To survey the need of additional church staff positions.
2. To review and approve job descriptions as prepared by the Pastor for all church staff annually.
3. To prepare and maintain an organizational manual relating to the church's employed personnel.
4. To recruit, interview, and recommend to the church prospective personnel except the pastor and Daycare staff.
5. To develop and recommend salaries and benefits for employed personnel and make recommendations to the Stewardship Committee.
6. To develop and recommend to the church policies and procedures for employed personnel administration, which includes a policy for time off (holidays, sick days, vacation, personal days, etc.) for all employed personnel.
7. To review annual performance evaluations for all employed personnel with the pastor and make recommendations on salary and benefits to the Stewardship Committee.

8. To conduct annual performance evaluation of the pastor and make recommendations on salary and benefits to the Stewardship Committee.

The Property and Property Use Committee shall be responsible for all church properties and use of properties. This committee shall be composed of seven (7) members. Its duties are:

1. To maintain an inventory of all church properties.
2. To plan and supervise the maintenance and use of space of all church properties, building and grounds, furniture and equipment, except when the equipment is designated for control by other church committees.
3. To supervise the purchase of any real estate approved by the church membership and to supervise the purchase of all church equipment, such as furniture and fixtures.
4. To allocate use of space on church grounds and in all church buildings, including residential dwellings owned by the church, and to lease church-owned residential dwellings upon such terms and conditions as the committee deems reasonable, when space provided by these properties is not being used by church purposes.

The Sanctuary Committee shall manage flowers and other decorations for the sanctuary and use of church facilities for celebrative events. This committee shall be composed of six (6) members. Its duties are:

1. To be responsible for placing flowers in the sanctuary for each Sunday's service.
2. To remove the same flowers, rearrange and carry them to the sick, elderly, and shut-ins of the church family.
3. To decorate the sanctuary for the Christmas season prior to the first Sunday of Advent and for other occasions when the entire church is involved.

4. To write and update a policy for the use of the church facilities for weddings, showers, receptions, and other uses as requested.

The Stewardship Committee shall keep the church members aware of our duties as Christians to practice stewardship in the management of income and commitment to giving in line with Biblical teaching. This committee shall be composed of the Church Treasurer and six (6) regular members. The Chairperson of Deacons, Sunday School Director, Woman's Missionary Union Director, Chair of the Baptist Men, Chairperson of the Properties and Properties Use Committee, and Chairperson of the Personnel Committee shall be ex-officio members. Its duties are:

1. To receive and evaluate budget requests.
2. To prepare and present the annual budget to the church.
3. To direct the stewardship emphasis and organize the Budget Subscription Campaign for each year.
4. To supervise non-emergency purchases and require bids when such purchases exceed \$1,000.
5. To serve as consultants on church finances, develop policies concerning expenditures not in the budget.
6. To select an auditor for the church each year if the committee believes this necessary.
7. To recommend to the church the salary and benefits for an interim pastor.
8. To monitor the church Financial Policy which will be on file in the church office.

The Sunday Property Security Committee shall be responsible for securing the church property on Sunday mornings. The committee shall be composed of two (2) members.

The Teller Committee shall be composed of six (6) members organized into two (2) teams with three (3) members serving on each team. Each team will have a team leader who will be responsible for ensuring that at least two (2) members of the team will be present. The committee will be under the supervision of the Treasurer who will be responsible for training the committee, and to act as counsel to the committee in special or unique situations. Its duties are:

1. To be responsible for counting Sunday receipt of offerings and contributions.
2. Each team will count Sunday receipts on alternate Sundays.
3. The team leader will place the offering envelopes along with the teller Report in the church safe.
4. The team leader will deposit the receipts in the night depository at SunTrust Bank.

The members of the Teller Committee will not rotate each year. This is to ensure that the confidential information of offering and contributions will be kept to a minimum number of people. If a committee member desires to be replaced it will be the responsibility of the Nominating Committee to fill the vacancy.

The University Ministries Committee shall oversee activities geared particularly to college-age students, including Wingate University students and members of the church family who are at other colleges and universities. This committee shall be composed of six (6) regular members with the College Sunday School teacher serving as an ex-officio member. Its duties are:

1. To conduct the adopt-a-student program.
2. To plan other special activities as needs are discerned.

The Usher Committee shall be responsible for the efficient handling of all church gatherings. This committee shall be composed of three (3) members. Its duties are:

1. To organize an adequate group of ushers for the Sunday worship service.
2. To develop suggestions for the ushers and inform them as to:
 - a. How to greet people before the service.
 - b. When and how to seat people.
 - c. How to collect the offering.
 - d. Where and when to report to duty.
3. To plan ushers for special meetings; e.g. revivals, funerals, etc.
4. To develop a plan for contacting an usher for his Sunday of service.
5. To assume the responsibility for receiving the offering.

The Visitation/Cassette Ministry shall manage our link with shut-ins and others who cannot attend services but want to stay abreast of the activities in the church community. This committee shall be composed of six (6) members. Its duties are:

1. To secure cassette tapes and video recordings of the worship service of the church and distribute tapes to those members who are shut in or desiring tapes or video recordings.
2. To visit and distribute church literature to those persons who are shut in and desiring literature.

The Wednesday Night Teller Committee shall be responsible for handling monies for Wednesday Nights Alive (WNA!). The committee shall be composed of three (3) members. Its duties are:

1. To collect money for meals on Wednesday night.
2. To count money and give to Administrative Assistant after all collections.

The Wednesday Property Security Committee shall be responsible for securing the church property on Wednesday evenings. The committee shall be composed of two (2) members.

The Youth Ministries Committee shall act as a liaison between the church fellowship and the youth ministry. Its chairperson and the president of the youth council will meet with the church council. This committee shall be composed of six (6) members. Its duties are:

1. To work with the youth director to coordinate youth activities.
2. Chaperon trips.
3. Substitute for youth director at Sunday meetings.
4. Meet with youth director once a month and/or at the discretion of the youth director.

Section 4. **Special Committees**

Special committees should be appointed by the church to carry out specific limited tasks (i.e. Constitution and By-Laws Committee and Building Committee). When the task is completed, the committee shall cease to exist.

The Baptist Affiliations Committee shall be composed of five (5) duly elected members serving on a rotation basis as initially assigned by the Nominating Committee and in addition shall be comprised of the following ex-officio positions:

1. Chair of the Diaconate
2. Chair of the Woman's Missionary Union
3. Chair of the Baptist Men
4. Director of Sunday School
5. Chair of the Youth Ministries Committee
6. Pastor

The Baptist Affiliations Committee shall consider the relationship and involvement of Wingate Baptist Church with all denominational and religious bodies with which we may consider affiliation.

The Long-Range Planning Committee shall seek to discover and analyze church and community needs, to recommend future goals and strategies to the congregation, to evaluate the effectiveness of the church program, and to interpret goals and strategies to appropriate groups. This committee shall be composed of eight (8) members.

The Pastor Search Committee shall exist only when there is a vacancy in the position of pastor and shall serve until a pastor is called or until relieved of its duties by the church.

Selection of a Pastor Search Committee: The deacons shall be responsible for beginning the process of choosing a Pastor Search Committee within two weeks of the announcement of the resignation of the Pastor.

1. The Pastor Search Committee shall consist of five (5) members.
2. The Pastor Search Committee shall be selected at a church conference. Each church member will be furnished a list of those eligible. On the following Sunday, secret ballots shall be cast by the church members for five (5) persons by the church members present. The ten (10) receiving the highest number of votes shall be contacted by the deacons, and those giving an affirmative reply will be declared as nominees for the Pastor Search Committee. In case any one of the ten declines to be a nominee, the deacons shall have the authority to contact the one receiving the next highest vote. In case of a tie for tenth place, all names tied for the tenth place shall be submitted as nominees.
3. The church shall vote by secret ballot for the Pastor Search Committee on the following Sunday. The five (5) receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected. If a tie occurs for the fifth place, then the deacons will be responsible for using a fair and impartial means of choosing the fifth person.

The Pastor Search Committee shall be responsible for presenting candidates for position of pastor to the church. Its duties are:

1. To get supply ministers and an interim pastor.
2. To seek out a suitable person for the position of pastor and recommend that person for the church. The committee will bring only one person for consideration by the church at one time. Election shall require an affirmative vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the number present and voting.
3. To recommend to the Stewardship Committee the salary and benefits for an interim pastor.
4. To recommend to the church for inclusion by the Stewardship Committee in the budget the salary and benefits for a new pastor.

ARTICLE V - PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

Section 1. General

All organizations of the church shall be under church control, all officers being elected by the church and reporting regularly to the church.

Section 2. Sunday School

There shall be a Sunday School, divided into divisions, departments, and classes for all ages and conducted under the direction of the Sunday School Director for the study of God's Word. The tasks of the Sunday School shall be to teach the Biblical revelation, reach persons for Christ and church membership, perform the functions of the church within its constituency, provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination.

Section 3. Wednesday Nights Alive!

There shall be a full Wednesday night program, complete with a meal, except during the summer. This program shall include choirs and mission education programs for preschoolers and children, missions education programs

for youth, and worship opportunities and workshops for adults. The purpose of Wednesday Nights *Alive!* is fellowship, worship, and education.

Section 4. Woman's Missionary Union and Baptist Men

There shall be a Woman's Missionary Union and a Baptist Men's organization with such officers and organizations as needed. The tasks of the Woman's Missionary Union and the Baptist Men shall be to teach missions, engage in mission action, support world missions through prayer and giving, provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination.

Section 5. Church Music Program

There shall be a Church Music Program under the direction of the Minister of Music. Such officers and/or organizations shall be included as needed. The music tasks shall be to teach music; train persons to lead, sing, and play music; provide music in the church and community; provide and interpret information regarding the music work of the church and denomination.

ARTICLE VI - ORDINANCES

Section 1. Baptism

A person who receives Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith; who professes Him publicly at any worship service; and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord shall be received for baptism.

- A. Baptism shall be by immersion in water except where disability prohibits immersion. In the case of disability, some other feasible method may be used.
- B. Baptism shall be administered by the Pastor or whomever the church shall authorize. (The Baptism Committee shall assist in the preparation for and observance of baptism.)
- C. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service.
- D. A person professing Christ and failing to be baptized after a reasonable length of time shall be

counseled by the Pastor and/or staff and deacons. If negative interest is ascertained, he shall be deleted from those awaiting baptism.

Section 2. The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and fruit of the vine, commemorate the death of Jesus Christ and anticipate his second coming.

- A. The Lord's Supper shall be observed regularly, preferably the first Sunday of each quarter, or as otherwise scheduled.
- B. The Lord's Supper shall be observed during the morning worship service, or as otherwise scheduled.
- C. The Pastor and Deacons shall be responsible for the administration of the Lord's Supper.
- D. The Communion Committee shall be responsible for the physical preparations of the Lord's Supper.

ARTICLE VII- CHURCH MEETINGS – VOTING

Section 1. Meetings

Regular worship, teaching, training, and other meetings shall be established by the church in business session. Changes in the schedule may be made by the Pastor. The format for the worship services is the responsibility of the Pastor.

Section 2. Moderator. Quorum

The Moderator shall serve at all business meetings. In absence of the Moderator, the Chairperson of the Deacons will serve as moderator. The members present at a regular or duly called business meeting shall constitute a quorum.

Section 3. Rules of Procedure. Voting

All business meetings shall be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order, Revised (and as further

revised from time to time). In regular business meetings, any member of the church may introduce a matter for consideration.

The Moderator may, at his/her discretion, deviate from Robert's Rules of Order in the interest of efficiency, justice and Christian fellowship.

In any meeting, whether regular, special, or annual, a member must be present to vote on any matter. Each member present is entitled to vote on each matter to be voted on by the members. No voting by proxy or by absentee ballot shall be permitted. On all matters except as otherwise prohibited by the by-laws, matters of business shall be decided by a majority of those members present and voting.

Section 4. Regular Meetings

Regular meetings are not required; however, the pastor, president, or majority of directors may set dates for such regular meetings to be held during the calendar year by publishing or announcing in a Sunday morning worship service the dates of such meetings for the next year prior to January 1 of the year in which such meetings are scheduled. Scheduled meeting dates may be changed by announcing such change in any prior Sunday morning worship service.

Section 5. Special Meetings

Special business meetings of the church may be called by the pastor, president, majority of directors, or by 10% of the membership. Provided, however, that for 10% of the membership to call for a special meeting each member must sign a demand for such meeting, date same and state therein the purpose or purposes for the meeting, and deliver the written demand to the Church Secretary. After delivery to the Church Secretary, such special meeting then must be called and convened within thirty (30) days. Otherwise, special meetings may be called by the Pastor, president, or majority of directors by oral announcement at a Sunday morning worship service or in the newsletter

or by other written notice, given at least one week prior to such meeting.

Section 6. Annual Meeting

- A. The annual church program meeting shall be held on the last Sunday of August. The agenda of the meeting shall be the election of church officers presented in the prior published Nominating Committee Report, or such as may be added by them or nominated from the floor; granting of church letters, and any other business, which has previously been published, or is accepted by the Moderator for the good of the church family.
- B. The annual fiscal meeting of the church shall be held during the month of December when it can be fitted most comfortably into the church program, but no later than December 31. The Stewardship Committee shall have had a budget presentation meeting and have sent a copy of the proposed budget to every church family or member prior to the meeting. The budget, when approved, shall go into effect January 1 of the following year.

Section 7. Oral Notice of Meetings

Oral notice of any business meeting (annual, special, regular) shall suffice, except as may be otherwise required by law.

ARTICLE VIII - ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS

Section 1. These By-Laws shall be considered in effect when approved by a majority of the members present and voting at a regularly scheduled business meeting provided that these By-Laws were provided in writing at least thirty (30) days prior to the time when the vote is taken.

Section 2. These By-Laws may be amended, or repealed, by a majority vote of the members present and voting at any regular business meeting of the church provided that such amendment is read at a previous business meeting and provided in writing to all members of the church present

and entitled to vote, and presented to members at least two (2) weeks prior to time vote is taken.

Section 3. All previous church action contrary to the provisions of these By-Laws is hereby rescinded.

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Index

- Albright, Madelyn, 253
Aldridge, Alex, 269
Asti, Dr. Martha Secrest, 218
Austin, Adam, 279
Austin, Elaine, 266, 329, 333
Bagley, Elizabeth, 269
Barnes, Dr. Bob, 199
Barnes, Jack, 237
Baucom, Kay Jo, 315, 329, 333
Baxley, Paul, 287, 288, 290, 303
Beasley, John, 189
Belk, Jon, 269
Bell, Dr. Bobby, 201
Bell, Greg, 272, 318, 328, 333
BIBLIOGRAPHY, 373
Billinger, Bob, 260, 273, 306,
329, 330
Billinger, Chris, 268, 279, 328,
329
Billinger, Robert, 194, 333
Bishop, Stephen, 316
Bivens, Corinna, 223, 235, 236,
256, 328
Bivens, John W., 191, 192
Board of Deacons, 328
Boone, Rosalie, 307
Bostic, Polly, 246, 273, 327, 333
Bostic, Ron, 215, 262, 290, 327,
333
Bostic, Suzanne, 279, 333
Braswell, Bess, 269, 335
Braswell, Bill, 256, 299, 327, 328,
329, 330
Braswell, Carolyn, 261, 267, 272,
275, 286, 290, 291, 298, 315,
328, 329, 333
Braswell, Lori, 209
Braswell, Molly, 284, 333
Broome, Ruth, 239
Buen Pastor El, 282, 289
Bush, President George W., 291
Bush, Vice President George H.
W., 252
Busher, Leonard, 190
Buttrell, Christine, 318, 319, 333
Buttrell, Heather, 300, 320, 333
Callahan, Kennon, 270
Capps, Philip, 246
Carey, William, 190, 310
Carter, Harold, 307
Carter, President Jimmy, 198,
293, 319
Chaney, Harry, 266, 328
Chapman, Everette, 213, 217
Christopher, Beverly, 256, 328,
329, 333
Chudalski, Heather, 246
Chudalski, Holly, 269
Chudalski, Mike, 245, 256, 258,
306, 315, 328, 329, 333
Chudalski, Mike and Sharon, 272
Chudalski, Sharon, 302, 329, 333

Church Members, 333

Clawson, Adelaide, 246, 333

Clinton, President Bill, 253

Coleman, Alice, 213, 246, 328,
333

Coleman, Barbara, 246

Coleman, Byrns, 260, 333

Coleman, Larry, 275

Collins, Brenda, 303, 304, 305,
327, 333

Connell, Peggy, 271

**CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS,
341**

Corts, Thomas, 208

Cowsert, Helen, 236, 333

Cox, Jane, 307

Cox, Lynn, 209, 211, 215, 234,
327

Cox, Ron, 258

Cox, Steven, 279, 333

Crisp, Shannon, 235

Croft, Ron, 318, 330

Crooke, Frances, 213, 229, 328,
329, 333

Crooke, Tom, 236, 239, 286, 308,
310, 312, 313, 328, 333

Crooke, Tom and Frances, 310

Crosby, Fanny, 193

Cuthbertson, D., 189

Cuthbertson, Della, 300, 334

Daniels, Grace, 241, 271, 328,
334

Davidson, William, 189

Davis, Alfred Culpepper, 218

Davis, Edmund Lilly, 218

Diaconate, 194, 213, 230, 236,
268, 302, 345, 351, 352, 353,
365

Doak, Robert, 256, 327, 334

Dole, Elizabeth, 293

Dupree, Dale, 245, 308, 329, 334

Dupree, Dale and Laraine, 306,
310, 316, 320

Dupree, Tommy, 209

Easley, Mike, 293

Edge, Dr. Findley, 232

Edwards, Jim, 207, 233, 327, 328

Edwards, John, 254

Edwards, Shannon, 209

Etters, Steve & Kim, 246

Eudy, Mitch, 205, 308

Eudy, Virginia, 300, 334

Faircloth, Lauch, 254

Fitzpatrick, Christo, 269

Fletcher, Myzelle, 246, 272, 328,
334

Fletcher, Sidney, 205, 257, 328,
334

Flowers, Grace, 218, 239, 334

Ford, Dr. Roy N., Jr, 199, 327

Ford, President Gerald, 198

Ford, Roy, 202, 218

Fosdick, Harry Emerson, 193

Fulgham, John, 210, 310

Funderburke, Woodrow, 215

Furman, Richard, 190

Gaddy, Carolyn, 187, 199, 211,
 213, 217, 223, 237, 242, 245,
 274, 307, 318, 328, 373
 Gales, J., 189, 373
 Gambill, Chris, 311, 313, 315
 Garlow, Chris, 316, 320, 334
 Gerding, Carolyn, 246
 Glass, Barry, 235
 Godwin, Amanda, 235
 Gorbachev, Mikhail, 252
 Graham, Billy, 220, 317
 Greer, R. V., 199
 Griffin, Betty, 235, 268, 271, 328,
 329, 334
 Griffin, Kate, 229, 233
 Griffin, Mildred, 229, 235, 239
 Hagan, Kay, 293
 Hall, James, 257, 299, 318, 327,
 334
 Hall, James & Shayne, 246
 Hargett, Bill, 272, 273, 298, 307,
 310, 313, 314, 315, 316, 320,
 328, 329, 330
 Hargett, Bill & Debbie, 303, 306
 Harris, C., 189
 Harris, C. T., 290, 329
 Harris, Jane, 275, 285
 Harris, Jon, 189
 Haskins, Don, 307
 Hastings, Charles A., 203, 210
 Hasty, Martha, 306, 308, 310,
 334
 Hasty, Wallace & Martha, 303
 Hawkins, William, Governor, 189
 Hayes, Robin, 293
 Hayes, Todd, 209
 Helms, Adam, 316, 320
 Helms, Effie, 212, 218
 Helms, Helen, 234, 262, 302,
 327, 334
 Helms, J.B., 218
 Helms, Jessie Mae, 271
 Helms, Senator Jesse, 216, 254
 Helms, T.K., 218
 Helwys, Thomas, 190
 Hinson, Alex, 295, 334
 Hinson, Gladys, 213, 229, 249,
 256, 328
 Hinson, Jacqueline, 209
 Hinson, Mary Katherine, 295,
 334
 Hobbs, Dewey, 196, 205, 212,
 217, 228, 267, 272, 301
 Hoerning, Jennifer, 286, 287,
 290, 298, 300, 302, 303, 329
 Hoerning, Robert, 299
 Hoge, Dean, 251
 Holder, Art, 236, 328
 Hughes, Langston, 287, 374
 Huneycutt, Amee, 288, 296, 336
 Iannaccone, Lawrence, 251
 Isner, Linda, 235, 236, 246, 249,
 256, 285, 327
 Jackson, Martha, 258
 Jacumin, Johnny, 314
 Jefferson, Thomas, 188
 Johnson, Benton, 251, 374
 Johnson, President Lyndon, 197

Johnson, Steve, 278
 Johnson, Steve and Elizabeth,
 282, 285, 309
 Johnston, William, 189
 Jones, Chris, 279
 Jordan, Carrie, 290, 335
 Kapelar, John, 299, 335
 Kapelar, Sherry, 302, 308, 330,
 335
 Karim, Rosa, 269, 335
 Kelley, Dean M., 219, 250
 Kirkman, Elaine, 213, 229, 249,
 256, 302, 314, 317, 328, 329,
 335
 Kirkman, Jerry, 258, 266, 285,
 315, 328, 329, 335
 Kissell, Larry, 293
 Kopiletz, Vasily, 277, 280
 Kukushkin, Nikolay, 277, 280
 Lane, Cheryl, 262, 263, 267, 270,
 272, 273, 274, 327
 Larrimore, Edith, 235, 245, 256,
 335
 Larrimore, Jennifer, 279, 335
 Larrimore, Joe, 236, 239, 245,
 256, 279, 285, 289, 314
 Larrimore, Peter, 218, 335
 Lewis, C. S., 272
 Lindsay, Bob, 275
 Link, William C., 217
 Little-Sweat, Sylvia, 272
 Lottie Moon, 200, 202, 208, 210,
 216, 234, 243, 245
 Loudermilk, Jean, 246
 Loudermilk, Phil, 218
 Lowery, Bette, 307
 Lowery, Tom, 210, 274, 276, 307,
 328
 Lowman, Bob, 206, 209, 215,
 234, 327
 Lowman, Bobby Lee, Jr, 224
 Lowman, Karla, 215, 234, 327
 Luidens, Donald, 251, 374
 Luther, Martin, 210
 Madison, Dolly, 188
 Madison, James, 188
 Magee, Bob, 298, 299, 308
 Mangum, Linda, 315, 327, 335
 Mangum, Mike, 315, 330, 335
 Marquina, Carlos, 233
 Marshall, Daniel, 191
 Mason, Bill, 207, 223, 295, 313,
 315, 320, 329
 Mason, Bill and Marie, 301, 303,
 306, 309, 320
 Matheson, Selma, 235
 Matthews, Kyle, 283, 288
 Maye, Donna, 209
 Maye, Elizabeth, 284, 306, 315,
 335
 Maye, William, 284, 335
 Mayton, Drew, 306
 McAuliffe, Crista, 227
 McConnell, Anne, 235, 271, 284,
 307
 McCorkle, Griggs, 318, 330, 335
 McCoy, James, 249

McCoy, Jane, 205, 231, 237, 246,
 258, 327, 328
 McCoy, Jim, 200, 218, 223, 233,
 237, 250, 257, 328
 McCraw, Harper, 318
 McCraw, Jarrod, 315, 329, 330
 McMahan, Linda, 282, 335
 McSwain, Esther, 234, 236, 246,
 327
 Medina, Jose, 256
 Menninger, Dr. Karl, 301
 Merrill, Don, 205, 236, 249, 250,
 256, 287, 298, 315, 328, 329,
 330, 335
 Merrill, Julie, 269
 Michael, Harvey, 249, 256, 258,
 281, 315, 328, 329, 335
 Michael, Harvey and Macie, 276,
 303, 306, 308, 310, 315
 Miller, Stephanie, 308, 310, 316,
 320, 335
 Monroe, James, 189
 Morgan, Edna, 237, 245, 271,
 336
 Morgan, Gene, 233, 256, 328,
 329, 336
 Moriah Association, 190
 Moser, Annette, 303, 327, 336
 Moser, Brent, 303, 308, 329,
 330, 336
 Moss, Lynn, 246, 258, 327, 328
 Murray, Jane, 236
 Murray, Keith, 246, 327
 Myers, Bobby, 209
 Myrick, Sue, 254
 Nash, Ed, 276
 Nash, Karen, 274, 282, 290, 297,
 327, 336
 Nixon, President Richard, 198
 Norman, Matt and Michelle, 302
 North, Tim, 209
 Nouwen, Henri, 305
 Obama, Barak, 293
 Odom, Derrick, 266
 Odom, Linda, 276, 288, 289
 Odom, Tommy, 284
 Overground Railroad, 233, 245,
 256, 257
Pastors, 327
 Perry, Don, 266, 329
 Perry, Edie, 285, 290, 302, 309,
 329, 336
 Peterson, Eugene, 193
 Pickett, Joseph, 189
 Pipes, Ken, 269
 Podgaisky, Gennady and Mina,
 303
 Ponds, Chris, 276, 295, 308, 315,
 318, 329, 336
 Ponds, Chris and Laura, 272
 Presson, Bryan, 215
 Rainey, Martha, 236
 Ray, Bethany, 300, 336
 Ray, Tiffany, 295, 336
 Reagan, President Ronald, 198,
 216, 226, 227, 252
 Revell, Melody, 272, 274, 327
 Roberts, Nick, 288, 290

Rosa, Karim, 335
 Rummage, Clark, 290
 Ruschlikon Seminary, 257
 Rush, Burrell, 189
 Rushing, Ron, 266
 Sanders, Walter E., 217
 Sandy Creek Baptist Church, 191
 Sanford, Governor Terry, 213
 Scott, Governor Kerr, 213
 Sellers, Mollie, 300, 336
 Setser, Clay, 315
 Setser, Hal, 298, 303, 329, 336
 Setser, Suzy, 314, 315, 329
 Shadrick, Amy, 209
 Sharp, Judge Suzie, 213
 Shelton, David K., 217
 Sherwood, David, 246, 262, 268,
 269, 279, 290, 306, 320, 327,
 328, 336
 Shorter College, 268
 Shurden, Walter, 257, 261
 Silgar, Alison, 246
 Simpson, Mitch, 226, 227, 228,
 230, 267
 Simpson, Mitchell, 196, 224, 237,
 245, 327
 Simpson, O.J., 253
 Skeen, Dr. Judy, 271
 Small, Andrew, 284
 Small, Andy, 273, 329
 Smith, Baron, 207, 236, 238, 239
 Smith, Bessie, 235, 307
 Smith, Brandon, 265, 269
 Smith, David, 199
 Smith, Derrill, 194, 291, 293,
 296, 327, 336
 Smith, Derrill and Cindy, 310
 Smyth, John, 190
 Somerville, Ellie, 279
 Somerville, Jim, 250, 255, 257,
 262, 269, 275, 276, 286, 287,
 327
 Southern Baptist Convention,
 209, 211, 216, 230, 231, 235,
 236, 237, 238, 241, 243, 257,
 261, 263, 278, 283, 342
 Spivey, Glenda, 234, 262, 271,
 327
 Sproule, Joe, 295, 298, 329
 Stearns, Shubal, 191
 Steele, Lauren, 279
 Steele, Trae, 279
 Stegall, Blair, 284
 Stegall, Callie, 279, 300, 336
 Stegall, Travis, 269, 288, 336
 Stone, Ann, 239, 246, 247, 327
 Stone, Laura, 269
 Story, Carol, 234, 246, 327
 Stover, Bill, 219, 239
 Surratt, Alice, 194, 336
 Surratt, Jerry, 222, 223, 266,
 285, 329
 Sykes, Daniel, 271, 279, 300, 337
 Sykes, John, 194, 260, 272, 275,
 329, 336
 Sykes, Owen, 295, 337
 Tart. Lyndia, 306, 310, 337

Taylor, Blythe, 275, 279, 285,
 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 327
 Taylor, Carol, 304, 307, 329, 337
 Taylor, Chuck, 298, 329, 337
 Taylor, Chuck and Carol, 288
 Taylor, Jay, 256, 262, 299, 337
 Taylor, Peggy, 318, 330, 337
 Thomas, Allison, 266
 Thomas, Jerry, 194, 223, 245,
 247, 276, 303, 306, 308, 310,
 315, 316, 328, 329, 330
 Thomas, Jerry and Ann, 310
 Thomas, Max, 268, 287, 328, 329
 Thomas, Trent, 303, 337
 Tomberlin, Brenda, 205, 206,
 262, 263, 271, 327
 Treadwell, Bill, 221, 241, 250
 Trull, Angie, 282, 290, 327
 Trull, Ruth, 246, 266
 Tucker, Ginger, 259, 262, 267,
 268, 321, 327, 328
 Wade, Dorothy, 297, 303, 327
 Wake Forest College, 191
 Wake Forest University, 216,
 237, 242, 257
 Wallace, Connie, 269
 Wallace, Kyle, 279
 Walter, L. Eugene, 217
 Ward, Christy, 209
 Weatherhead, Leslie, 285
 Wilkins, Kristi, 246, 327
 Williams, Ann, 215, 260, 262,
 273, 295, 327, 337
 Williams, April, 303, 308, 316,
 337
 Williams, Carole, 218, 223, 246,
 299, 318, 330, 337
 Williams, Mary, 239
 Williams, Matt, 303
 Williams, Sally, 272, 274, 275,
 288, 290, 302, 311, 313, 327,
 337
 Williams, Tom, 202, 294, 337
 Wingate University, 274, 280,
 293, 308, 310, 322, 363
 Wingate, Washington Manley,
 191
 Woods, Julia, 303
 Woodson, Walter and Phyllis,
 271, 299, 303
 Young, Jim, 218
 Young, Robert, 218
 Young, Tina, 209
 Youngman, Lex, 305
 Ziegler, Sonny, 318, 330, 337

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Author Biographies

Carolyn Caldwell Gaddy is a native of Rock Hill, South Carolina, where she graduated from Winthrop College with a Master of Arts degree. She taught at Wingate College from 1932 until she retired in 1975. During this period she also taught Sunday School at Wingate Baptist Church. After she retired Carolyn dedicated more time to her community and Wingate Baptist Church where she served as Sunday School Superintendant and as a deacon in the church.

Jerry L. Surratt is a North Carolina native and a graduate of Wingate College, Wake Forest University and Southeastern Seminary. He received his Ph.D. from Emory University and returned to Wingate in 1967 where he served as an administrator and taught history and religion courses. At the time of his retirement, he was Dean of the Charles A. Cannon College of Arts and Sciences. In 1983 he authored a biography of Gottlieb Schober, a Salem Moravian community and religious leader. He also assisted Carolyn Gaddy in preparation of Part I of this book.

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